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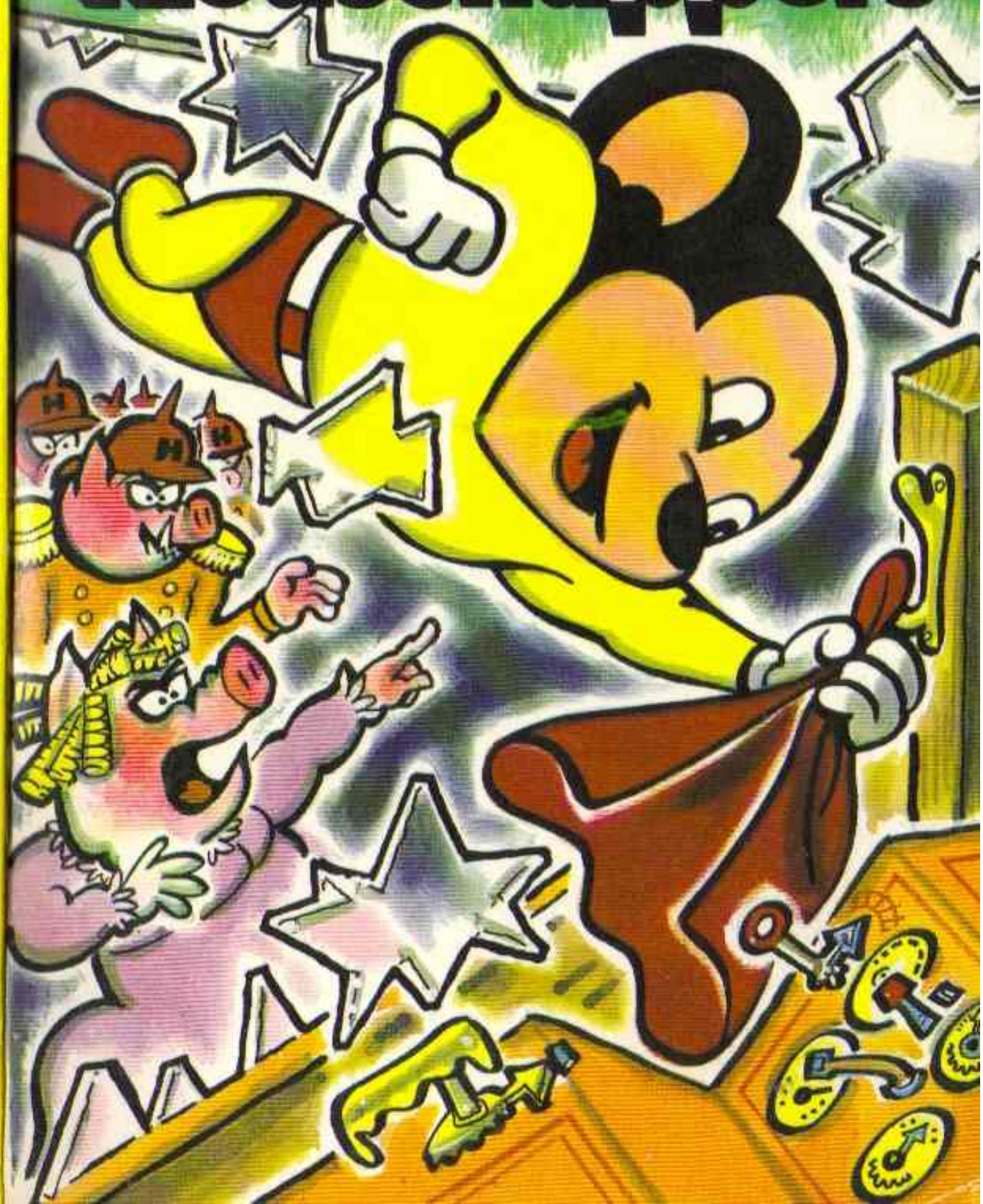
MIGHTY MOUSE Foils The Mousenappers



MIGHTY MOUSE FOILS THE MOUSENAPPERS

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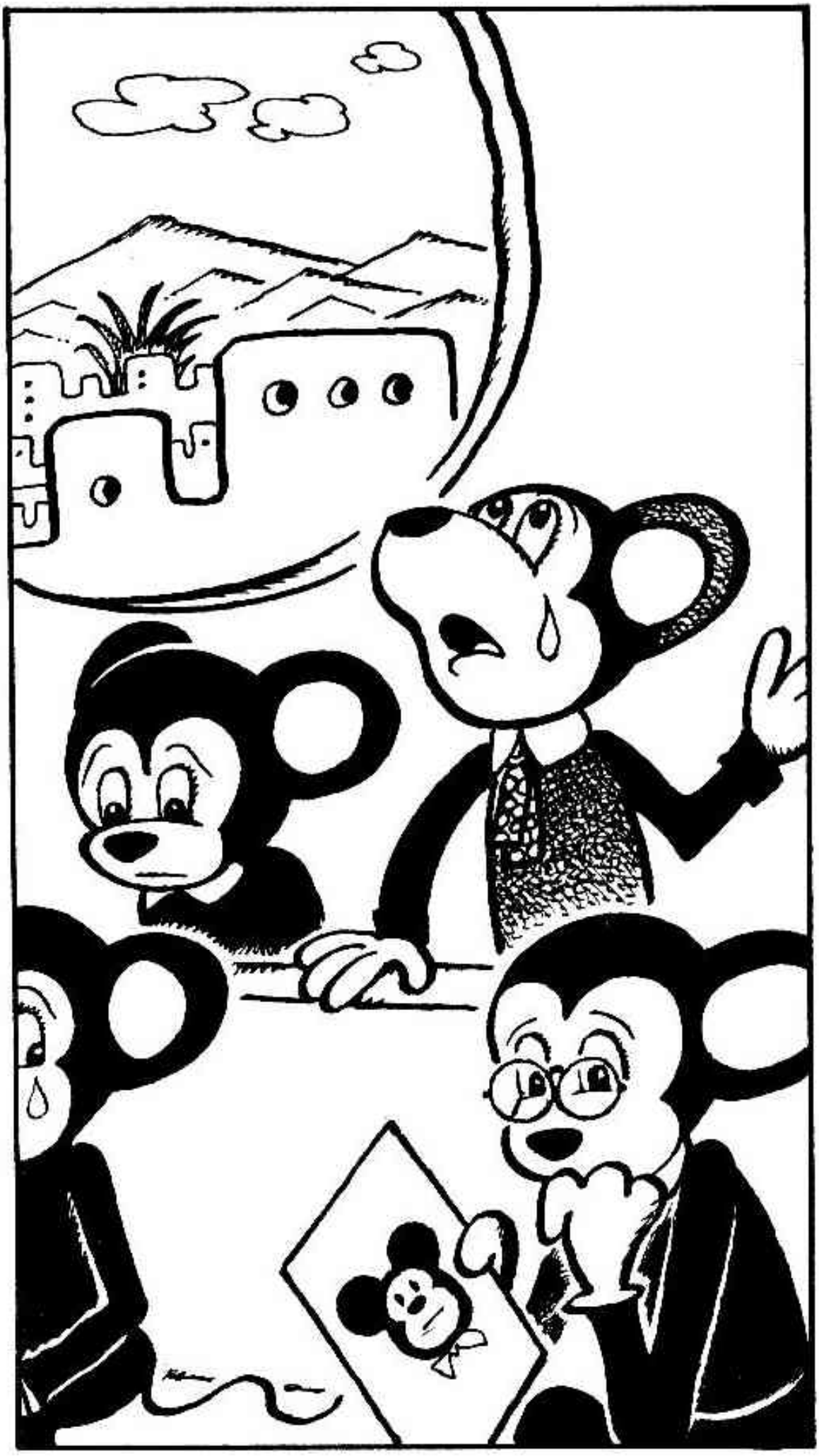
"This meeting will come to order!" cried the Mayor of Mouseville.

"You all know," he began, "why I have called this emergency meeting. There has been an alarming number of disappearances involving our teenage mouse population. For quite a while I was convinced, along with many of you, that these young ones were simply

dropping out of school and running off to see the world, just as so many young humans have done. Our police chief felt the same way. But I know that a number of you, including many of the parents, feel very different about the reasons for so many disappearances. This meeting, therefore, will allow us to hear from some of the parents. The meeting is now open for discussion."

A grey mouse halfway back in the crowded office stood up. "My wife and I don't believe it!" he said. "We simply don't believe that our son Rodney would quit school and just run off! He's an honor student and had no bad habits at all!"

A general chorus of agreement came from the



gathering. At the side of the Mayor, the chief of police rose to his feet and said, "Then how do you explain the fact that we have searched for two months and have not turned up one single, solitary clue? The only conclusion we can come to is that the young mice who have disappeared do not want anyone to know where they are!"

A third mouse stood up. He waited patiently for the outburst which followed the statement of the police chief to quiet down. Finally he spoke. "Your Honor," he said to the Mayor, "my name is Alpha Field. We believe that the police HAVE done everything in their power, and it simply isn't enough."

"Then what do you suggest?" asked the Mayor. "Who shall we

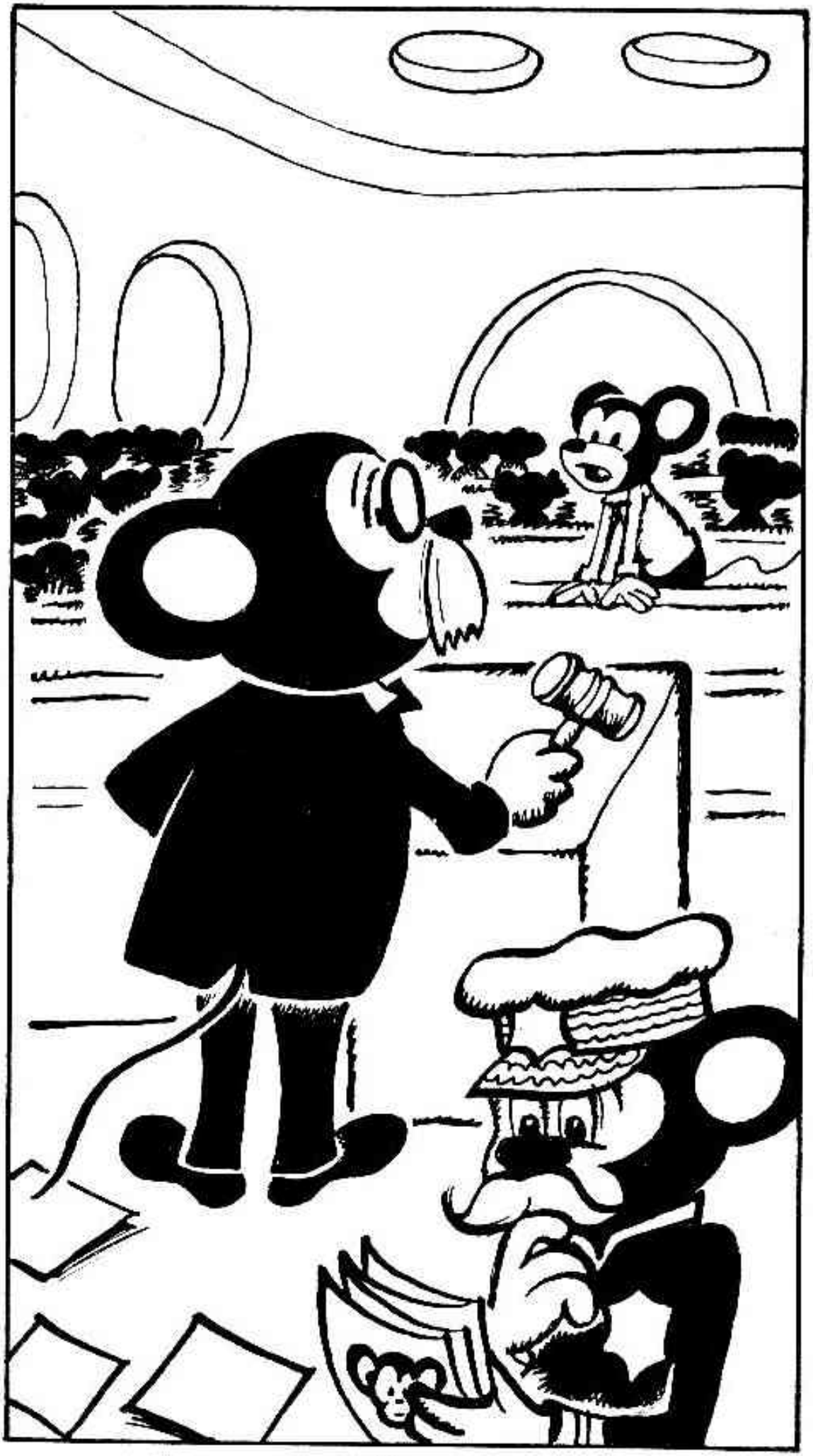
turn to? The MBI?"

"No, not the MBI," was the reply. "We have nothing against the Mouse Bureau of Investigation, you understand. It's just that they have their hands full at the present time. We have an entirely different idea about how to go about solving this mystery and putting a stop to these disappearances."

"I can only repeat my question," the mayor said. "What do you suggest?"

The mouse whose name was Field had remained standing. "We suggest that the police halt their efforts, except to assist in any way possible the individual we have contacted."

"Just who is this individual who is going to take over for my department?" asked the police



chief. "He'd better be good!"

"Good?" said the mouse whose name was Field. "I don't think anyone who has ever heard of him would describe him as merely good. I will tell you his name, and you can judge his goodness for yourselves!"

"Well?" cried the Mayor, who was losing his patience, "Who is it?"

"The name," replied the mouse whose name was Field, "is MIGHTY MOUSE!"

When they heard those words, the eyes of the Mayor and the police chief opened very wide.

"You mean," gasped the Mayor, "that Mighty Mouse is coming here? To Mouseville?"

"You mean," gasped the police chief, "that the most famous crime fighter in mouse

history is going to take over, when we're not even sure there's been a crime?"

The mouse whose name was Field said, "HE'S sure, and if Mighty Mouse is sure, we're sure, too! And we're just as sure that he'll find the answer we're looking for!"

Late next afternoon, there was a knock at the door of the mouse whose name was Field. When he answered it, he smiled and said, "Come in, Mighty Mouse! You're right on time!"

"Hello!" said Mighty Mouse. "Let's get right to the point—is there anywhere we can meet with these parents? I want to get as many impressions of exactly what has been going on as I can, as quickly as you can give them to me!"

Mr. Alpha Field smiled and said, "I had expected this. I have engaged the town hall for this evening, and several hundred of us will be there."

Mighty Mouse said, "I regard this as extremely serious and intend to spend all my time and effort until we have the answer!"

At the meeting that evening, Mighty Mouse learned the following facts. All were healthy, strong teenagers. None of them had ever given any evidence of any strange behavior, none had police records, all had simply disappeared.

Mighty Mouse sat down with Mr. Alpha Field the next morning. "To begin with," said Mighty Mouse, "there doesn't seem to be any possibility that this was part of a plot thought up by the

TOWN-HALL

young mice. If it was, there would have been some kind of advance notice, some evidence of rebellion before the actual disappearances. Besides, I'm sure that out of the six hundred and forty-nine who are missing, at least one or two of them would have contacted their parents."

"Then what's the answer?" asked Alpha Field.

"An outside source," answered Mighty Mouse. "Something evil and dangerous. I am particularly interested in the fact that all of those who have disappeared are strong, healthy young mice, capable of hard work."

"There are a number of factories both in town and nearby," said Alpha Field, "but I don't think that they would . . ."

"I will investigate that possibility," interrupted Mighty Mouse, "but I doubt that any factory or business which is a permanent part of the community would dare attempt anything so bold."

"Then where do you propose to look?" asked Alpha Field.

"I have the feeling," replied Mighty Mouse, "that while they are not in Mouseville, they may not be far away. What's the nearest town to Mouseville?"

"Squeak City," answered Alpha Field. "about twenty miles from here."

"If these young mice are being held captive, I don't think they'd be held in a city," said Mighty Mouse. "Too much risk of exposure. What's between here and Squeak City?"

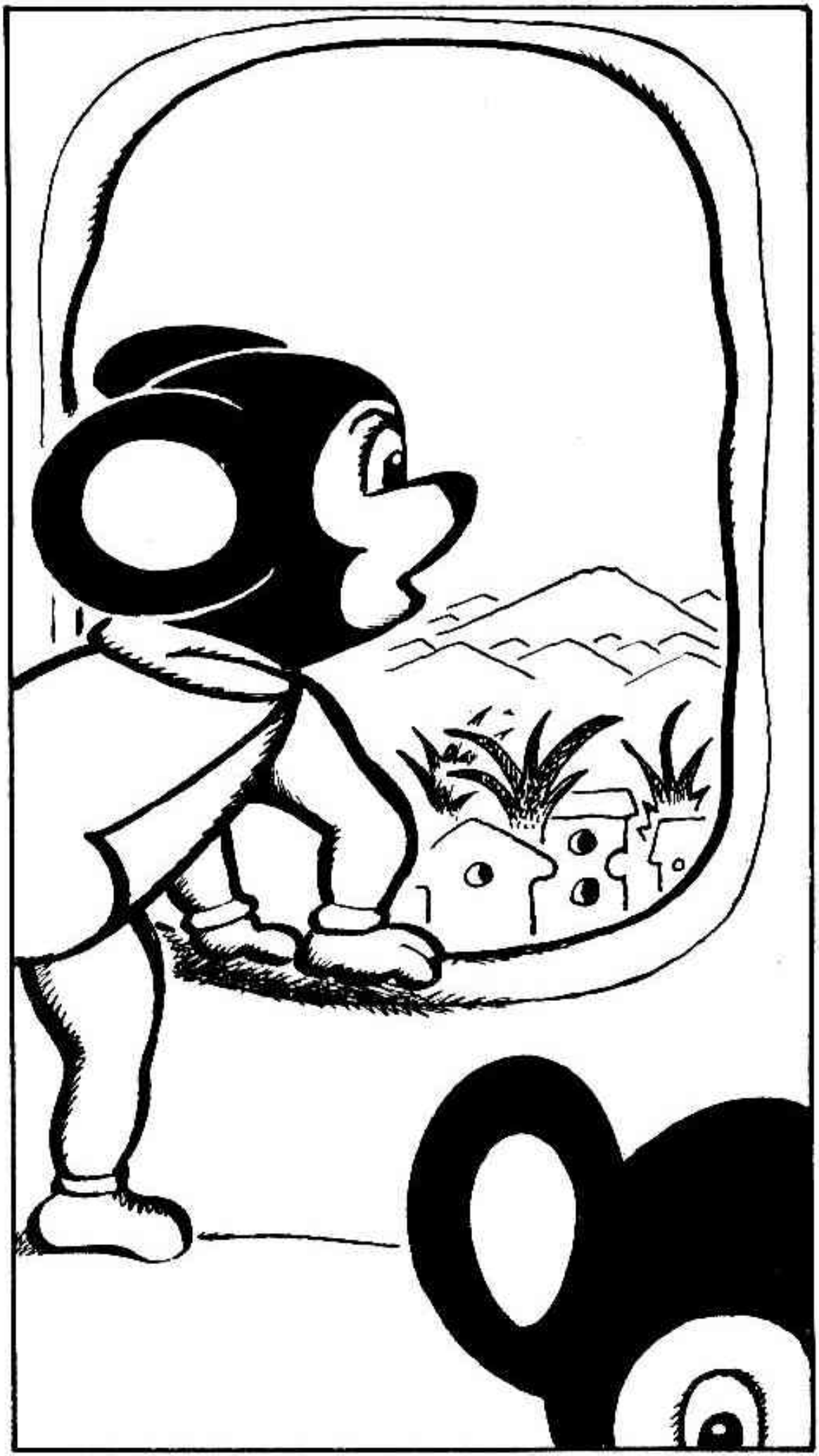
"Just mountains," replied Alpha Field, "very wild country."

Mighty Mouse said, "That doesn't sound promising. It would probably be easy enough to hide the young mice in those mountains—but why? There must be a reason. Someone must be using them for a purpose we can only guess at. Are you sure there's nothing between here and Squeak City?"

"Nothing at all," answered Alpha Field. Then a surprised look came over his face. "I just remembered something," he added.

"At the foot of the mountains," continued Alpha Field, "on the Squeak City side, there's a circus."

"A circus?" said Mighty Mouse. "How long has it been there?"



"I'd say about four months," replied Alpha Mouse. "I believe they're leaving in a few days."

"Interesting!" Mighty Mouse said. "Didn't these disappearances start just about the same time that the circus arrived?"

"You're absolutely right!" exclaimed Alpha Field.

"Alpha," said Mighty Mouse, "I'm going to need your help. I want you to attend the next performance of that circus. By the way, who owns it?"

"The billing says HOGGE BROTHERS GIGANTIC SUPER-COLOSSAL CIRCUS AND SIDE-SHOW," answered Alpha Field.

"Hogge Brothers," said Mighty Mouse. Then he repeated, "Hogge Brothers. The name rings

CIRCUS
and
SIDESHOW

a bell, but I can't connect it. However," he went on, "it will come back to me. While you're at the circus, I want you to take a very careful look around for anything, anything at all, that's the least bit suspicious."

"There's a performance this afternoon," said Alpha Field.

"Good!" cried Mighty Mouse. "I would go myself, but I'm too well known. While you're at the circus, I'm going to have a long, hard look at those mountains!"

"I don't think you realize what a wilderness those mountains really are, Mighty Mouse," said Alpha Field. "It would take a small army years to explore!"

"You're forgetting something, Alpha," smiled Mighty Mouse. "I can fly and cover more territory in an afternoon than your small

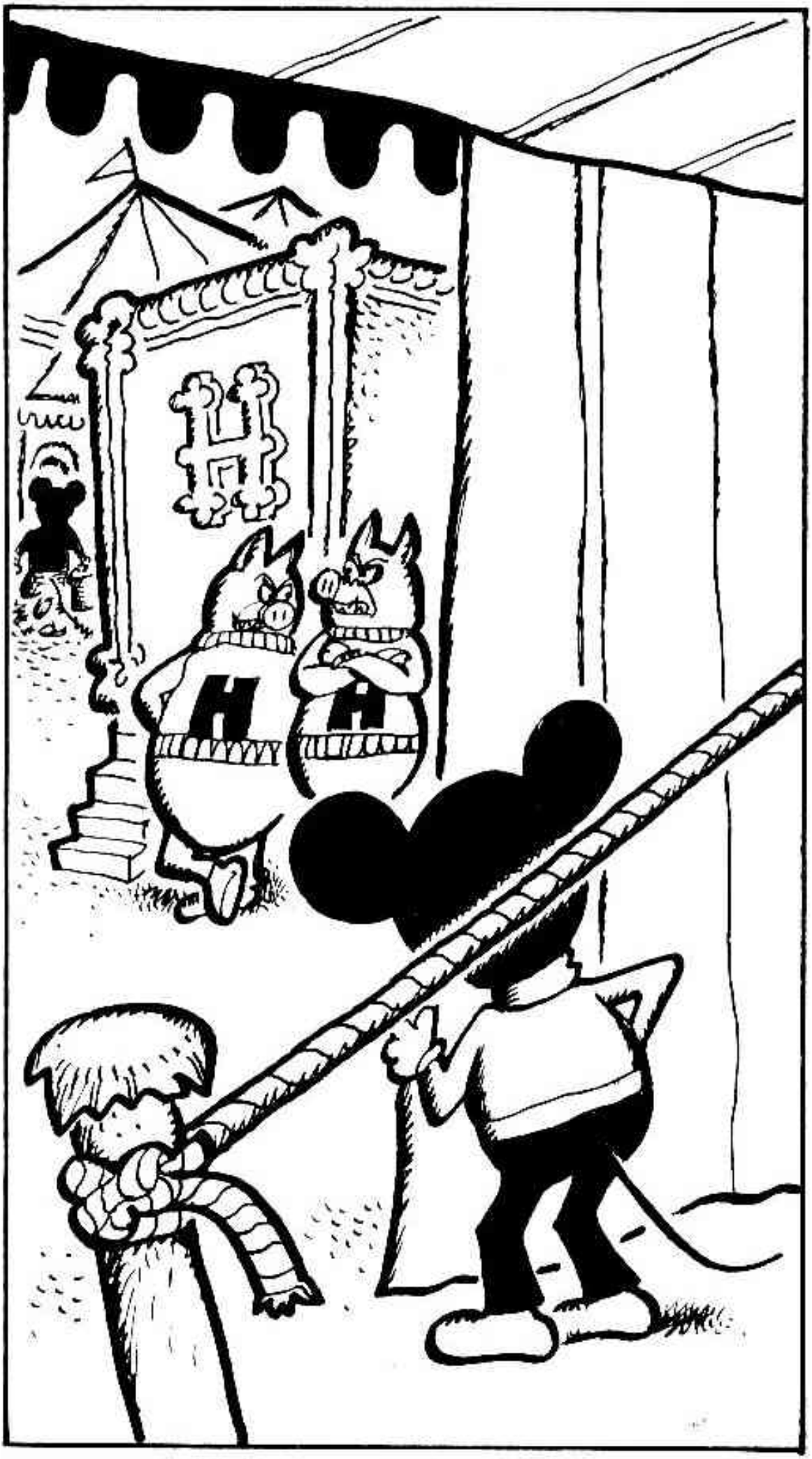
army could in a month!"

That evening they met again.

"I sat through the entire performance," reported Alpha Field. "Then I walked all over the circus lot and looked into the sideshow. Nothing seemed unusual to me. I saw the Hogge Brothers. They're big and nasty looking, all right. Very unpleasant, rough-looking characters, all of them!"

"Was there nothing at all out of the ordinary? During the performance, for instance?" asked Mighty Mouse.

"No, not really," answered Alpha Field. "They did seem to be having a little trouble with the lights. They dimmed three or four times, but came right back up again. How did you make out with your survey of the

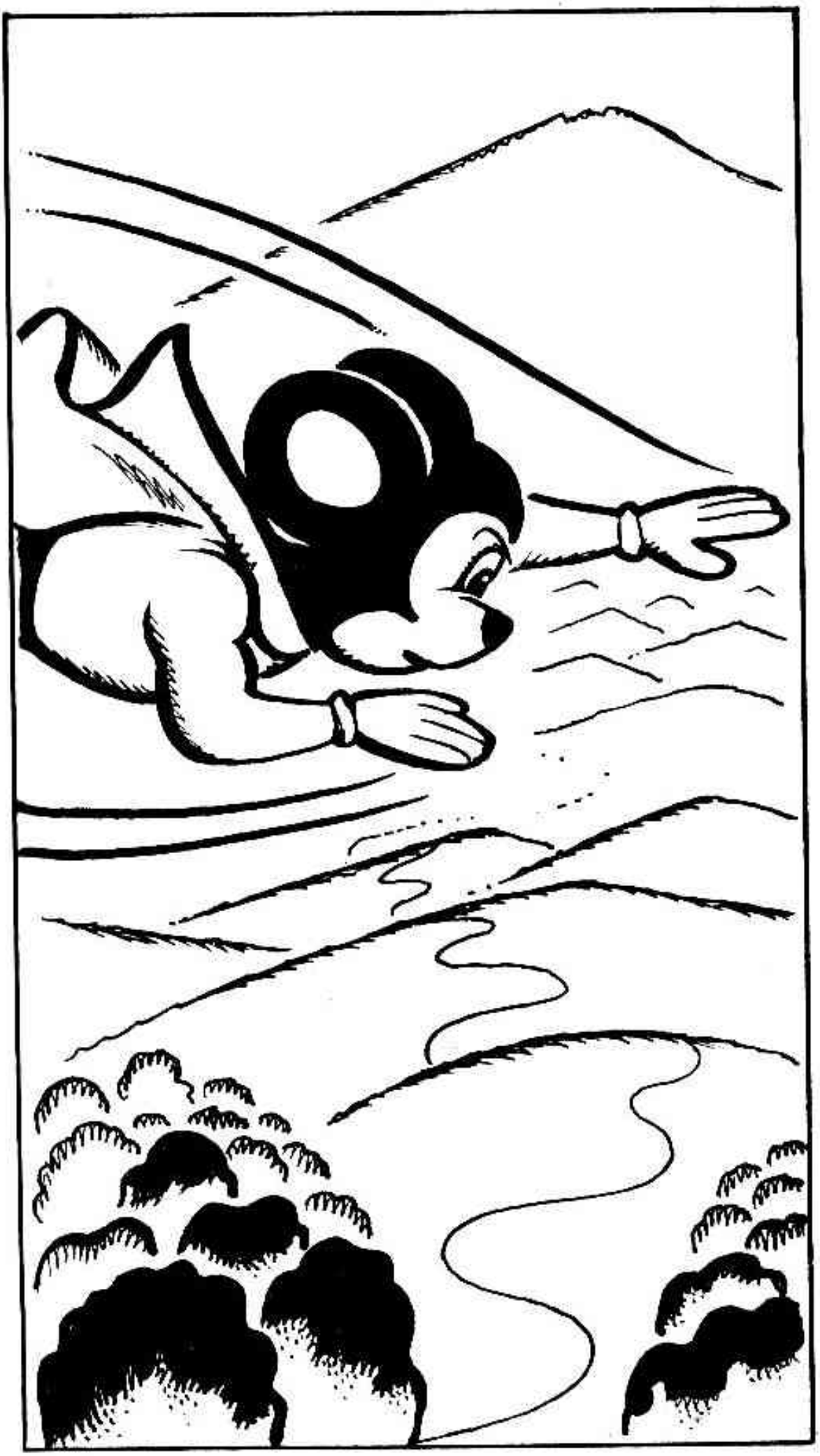


mountains?"

"I saw exactly what you said I'd see," replied Mighty Mouse. "A wilderness! However, I did notice one thing that might be worth investigating further. Not far from the circus grounds, but still in the foothills, there's a sort of pattern, as though something were coming out of those foothills in the general direction of the circus. There's no trace of whatever it is once it's out of the hills, though, and you can see it only from rather high up. I didn't want to fly any lower, because I didn't want to be spotted by anyone on the circus grounds."

"What's our next move?" asked Alpha Field.

"So far, we haven't much to go on," replied Mighty Mouse, "but there are two things I need to

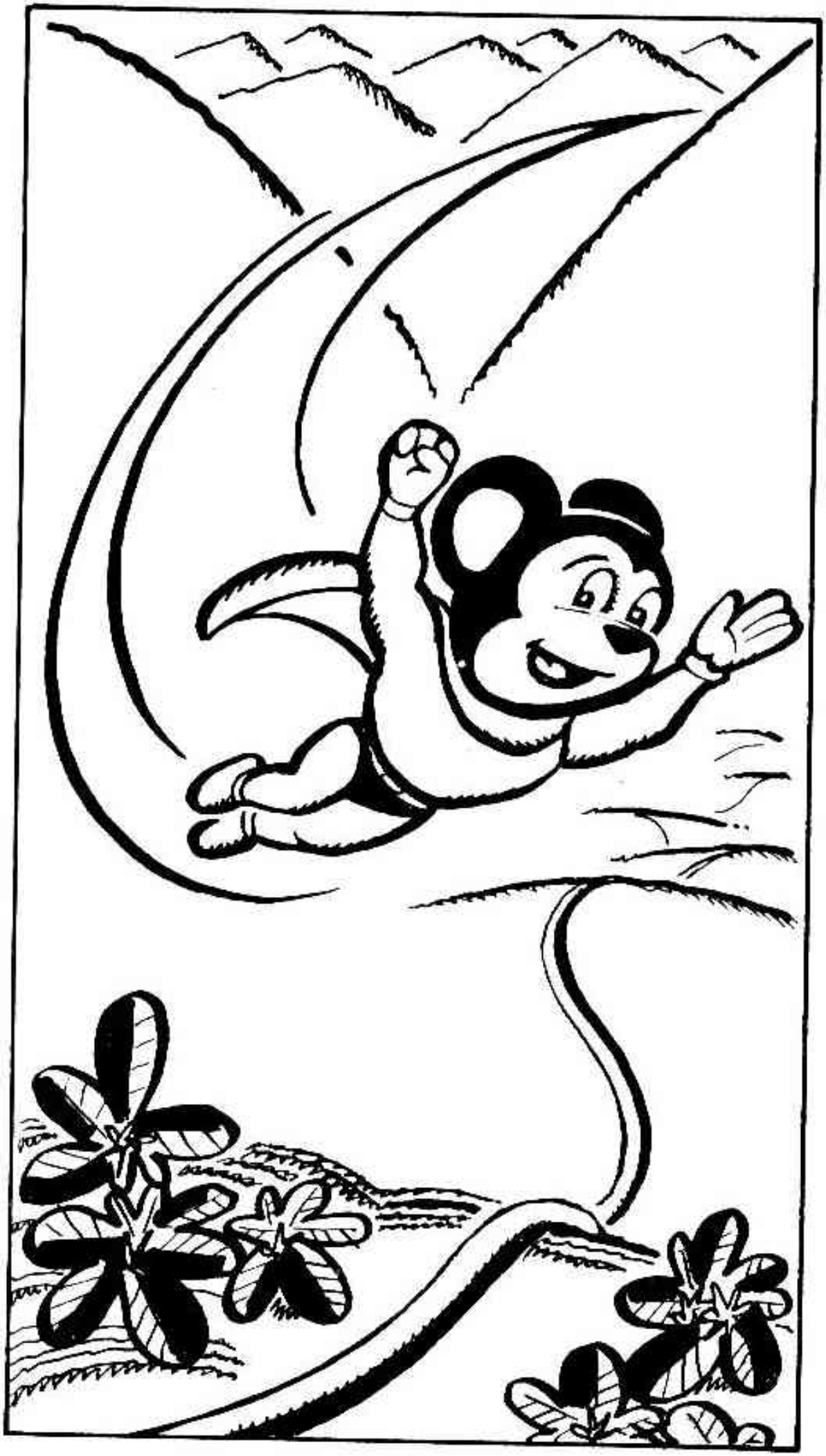


take a closer look at. I want you to have your police chief find out if the power company in Squeak City has any record of any power slowdown yesterday afternoon that would correspond to the dimming of the lights you mentioned. And right now I'm leaving to see if I can discover what that puzzling pattern coming out of the foothills really is. Under cover of darkness, I can fly lower and move around without being seen."

"I'll call the police chief at once!" exclaimed Alpha Field.

"And I'll be back later tonight," said Mighty Mouse.

It took only a few minutes for Mighty Mouse to cross the mountains and circle low over the foothills. With his super-vision, the pattern he had seen in mid-

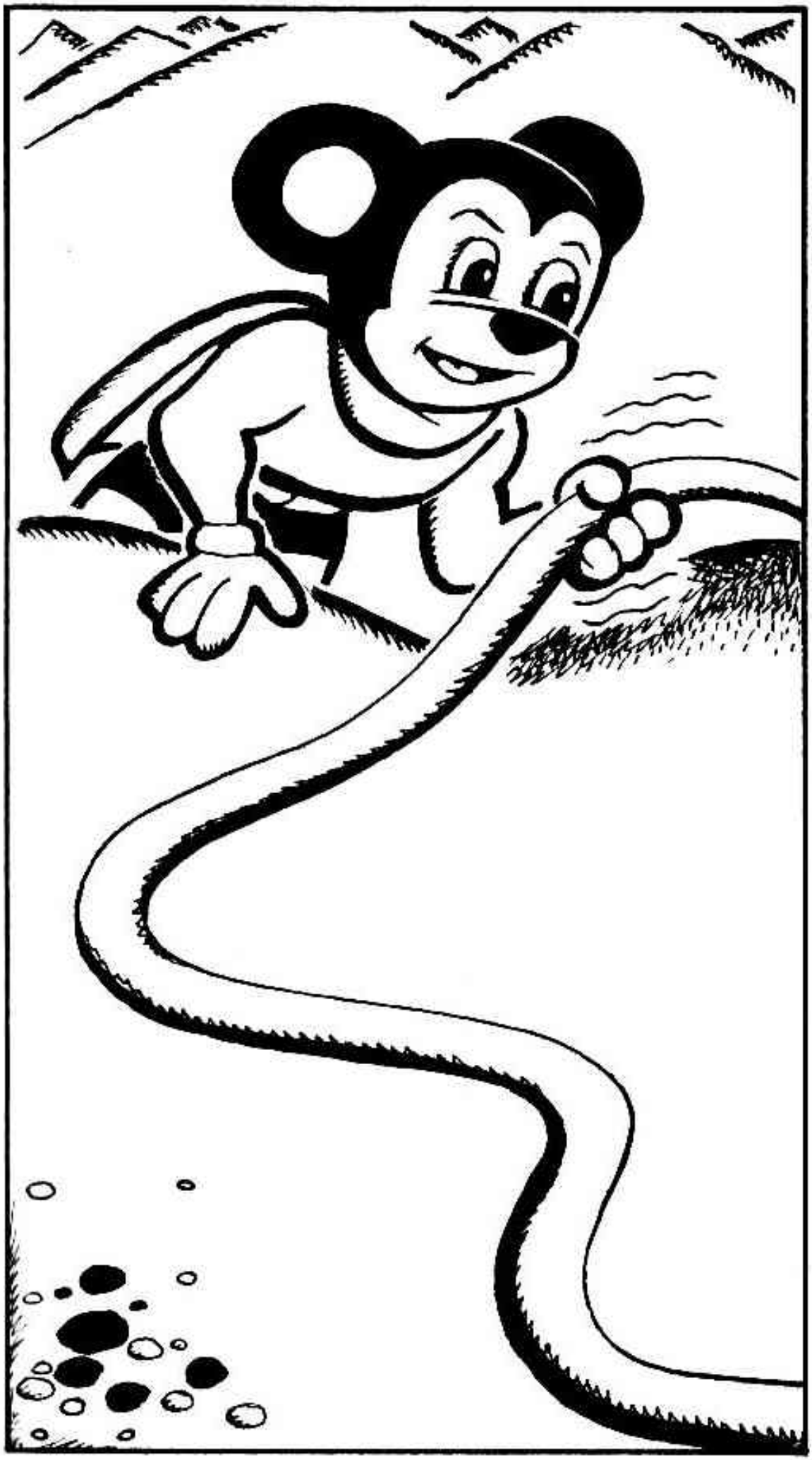


afternoon was clear. He flew lower and lower and came to a gentle landing. Then he began to search the ground where he had spotted the pattern. Suddenly, he dropped to one knee, lifted something in his hand, and peered closely at it.

"Godfrey!" he said to himself. "It's a cable, and it's warm! This thing is carrying electrical current—but why? The circus can get all the power it needs from the Squeak City power company!"

Mighty Mouse followed this cable out of the foothills. "Hmmm," he muttered, "once it's out of the foothills, it goes underground. I think I'd better trace it and find out where it comes from!"

Mighty Mouse took to the air



once again. And then he saw it!

"The cave entrance. The cable goes into a cave!" he exclaimed. "I'm going to have to see what's in that cave!"

Mighty Mouse dropped to a gentle landing at the mouth of the cave, took a cautious look around, then stepped inside into utter darkness. Using his super-vision, he followed the cable to a glow of light in the distance.

Hurrying now, he reached the source of light and gasped in amazement. He was standing on the edge of an enormous cavern, deep in the heart of a mountain!

Far below was a giant treadmill, and on the treadmill, running frantically to keep it up to full speed, were several hundred young mice!

"This is it!" gasped Mighty Mouse.

"Correct!" boomed a voice that seemed to fill the cavern. Looking up, Mighty Mouse saw a loudspeaker on the wall. "You've found what you were looking for, but it won't do you one bit of good!"

"What th- - -?" exclaimed Mighty Mouse. "That's a FEMALE voice!"

This was greeted by a roar of laughter from the loudspeaker. Then the voice boomed, "Yes, mouse, you've met your match at last!"

"No!" shouted the crime fighter. "You're dealing with MIGHTY MOUSE!"

"Indeed?" came from the loudspeaker. "Isn't that interesting! What do you propose

to do about it?"

"THIS!" cried Mighty Mouse. Then he took one step forward, sprang into the air, slammed into something, and fell to the ground!

Stunned for the moment, he heard the voice say, "Just a simple force field, mouse, but one even you can't break through! And the passageway behind you is full of my guards, the Boares!"

"Who-who are you?" asked Mighty Mouse. "I've remembered who the Hogge Brothers are, and they're nothing but petty crooks. They couldn't dream up something like this set-up!"

"You're a very clever mouse," the voice said, "but you overlooked something. You know about Herman and Harold

Hogge, but you DON'T know about ME!

"I am the completely unknown Hogge SISTER, Hildegarde Hogge! This entire project is MY brain child! Next week, I will be the most famous and powerful person in the world!"

"Got to find out more about this! Got to keep her talking!" said Mighty Mouse to himself. Then aloud he said, "What's going to make you so famous? That mouse-powered treadmill?"

"No!" said the voice from the loudspeaker. "That treadmill generates the enormous amount of power I need for my laser super-resonator. With it, I can destroy anything anywhere on earth, even the earth itself, if I so choose!"

"Laser super-resonator? It

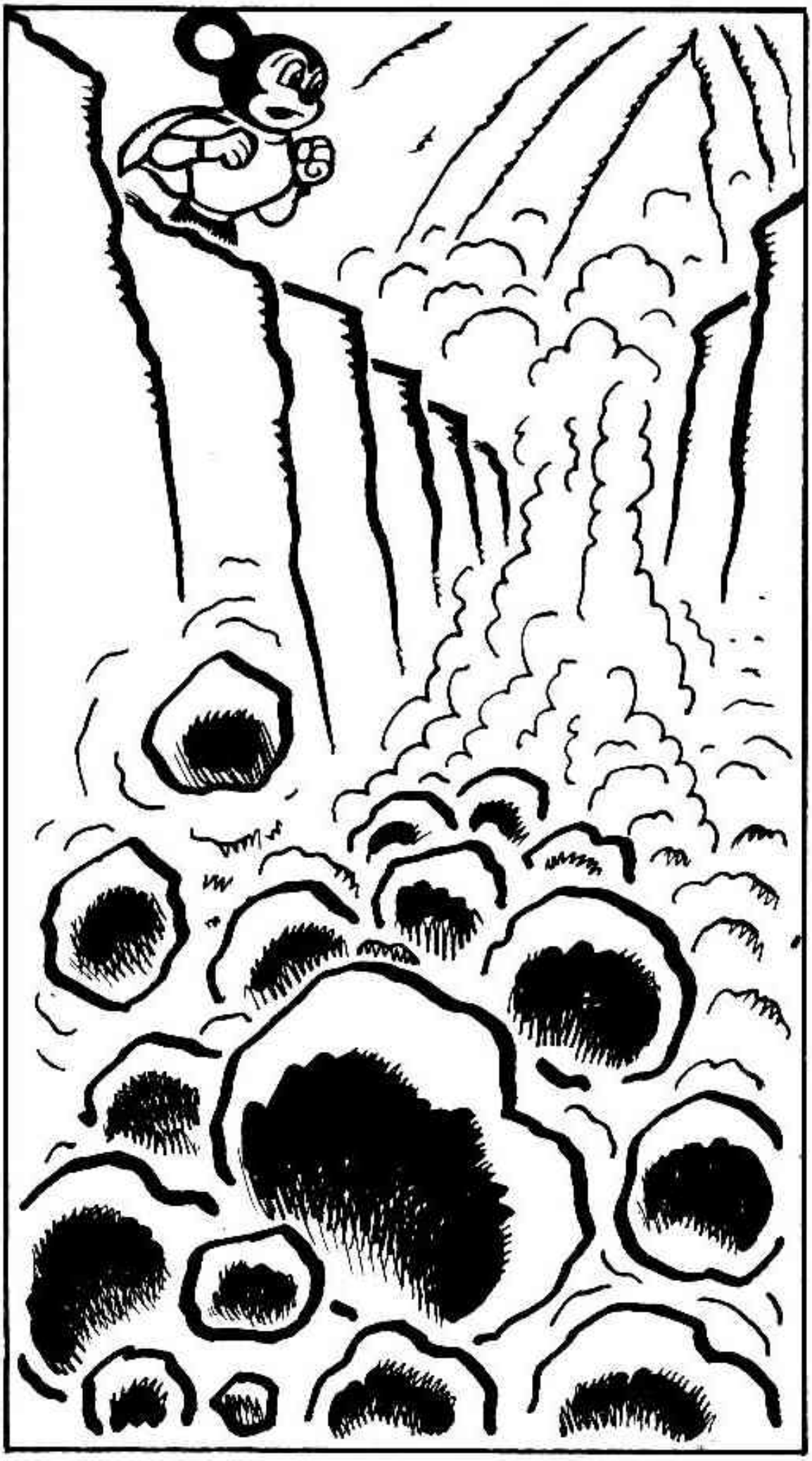
sounds very impressive, but what does it do?" replied Mighty Mouse.

"Watch the wall on your left, wee one!" boomed the voice. Mighty Mouse looked at the wall. Gradually it began to glow with a reddish hue. Then it vibrated, and the vibration grew stronger and stronger. Suddenly, a whole section of the wall broke away, and tons of rock crashed to the bottom of the cavern with a thunderous roar!

"That was a tiny example of what it does, pee-wee!" roared the loudspeaker. "As a matter of fact, I'm thinking of testing it to see if I can break up the moon!"

"But what good is it? What purpose can it serve?" Mighty Mouse asked.

"It's not designed for good. It's



designed for power! And its purpose is to give me control of the world!"

"She's crazy!" said Mighty Mouse to himself. "Time for me to get out of here!"

"Now!" he shouted and dove straight for the wall of Boares!

Late the next morning, Alpha Field answered a knock on his door.

"Mighty Mouse! Come in! Good heavens, where have you been and what's happened to you?"

The last question was occasioned by Mighty Mouse's appearance. His face and his entire body were scratched and torn. His clothes were almost in rags, and he looked beaten.

Mighty Mouse told him the story and then, "I battled my

way through her mob of guards, the Boares, and made my way out of the cave. Then I made a terrible discovery!"

"What was it?" Alpha Field asked.

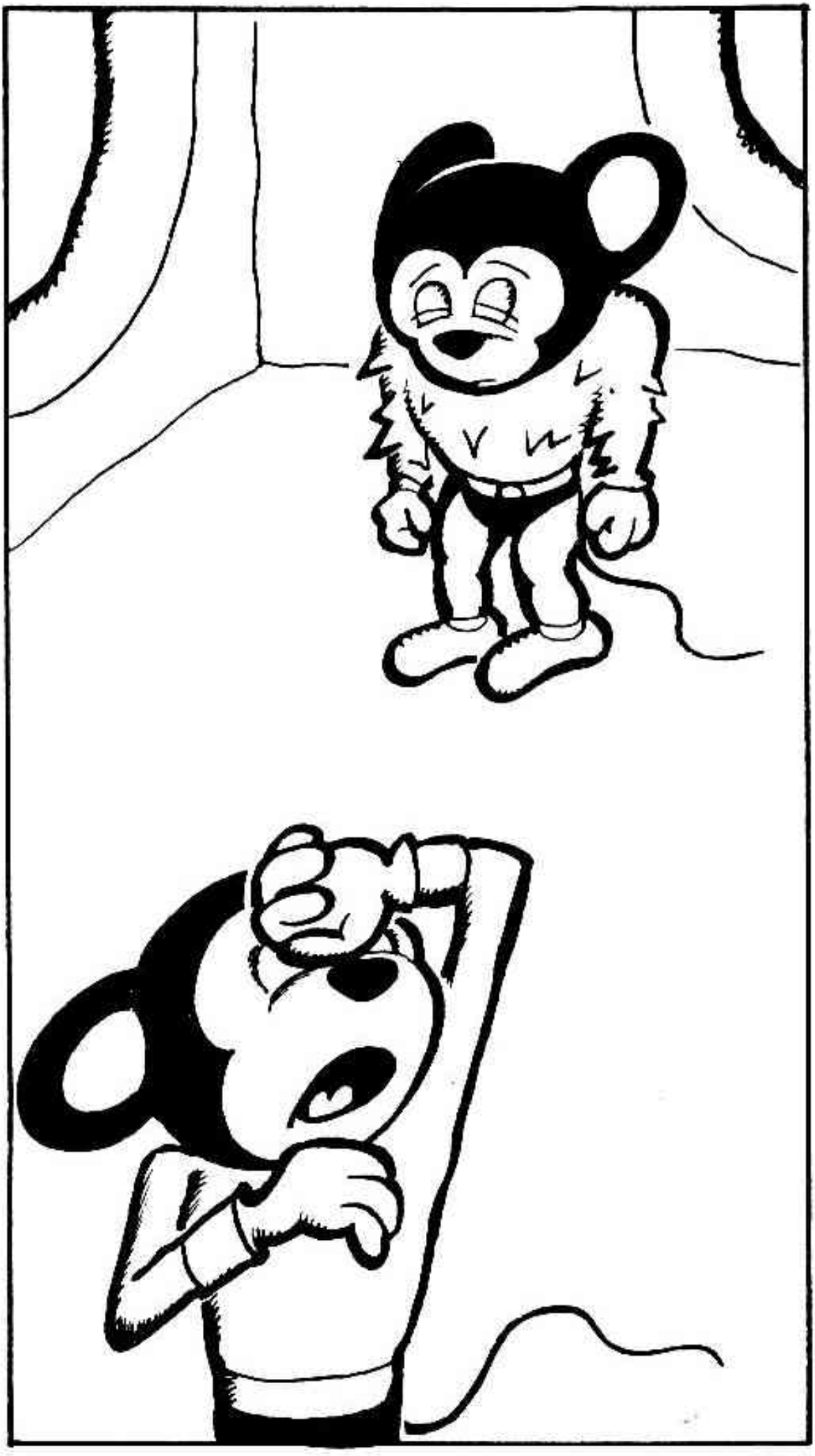
"I lost MY source of power in the battle with the Boares!

"My cape! One of the Boares must have torn it off my back at the last second because I didn't notice it until I was outside and tried to fly out of there," Mighty Mouse said.

"Does this mean you can't fly, have no super-vision, no extra-ordinary powers at all?" Alpha Field asked.

"That's EXACTLY what it means!" answered Mighty Mouse.

"Then we ARE in trouble!" exclaimed Alpha Field. "How did

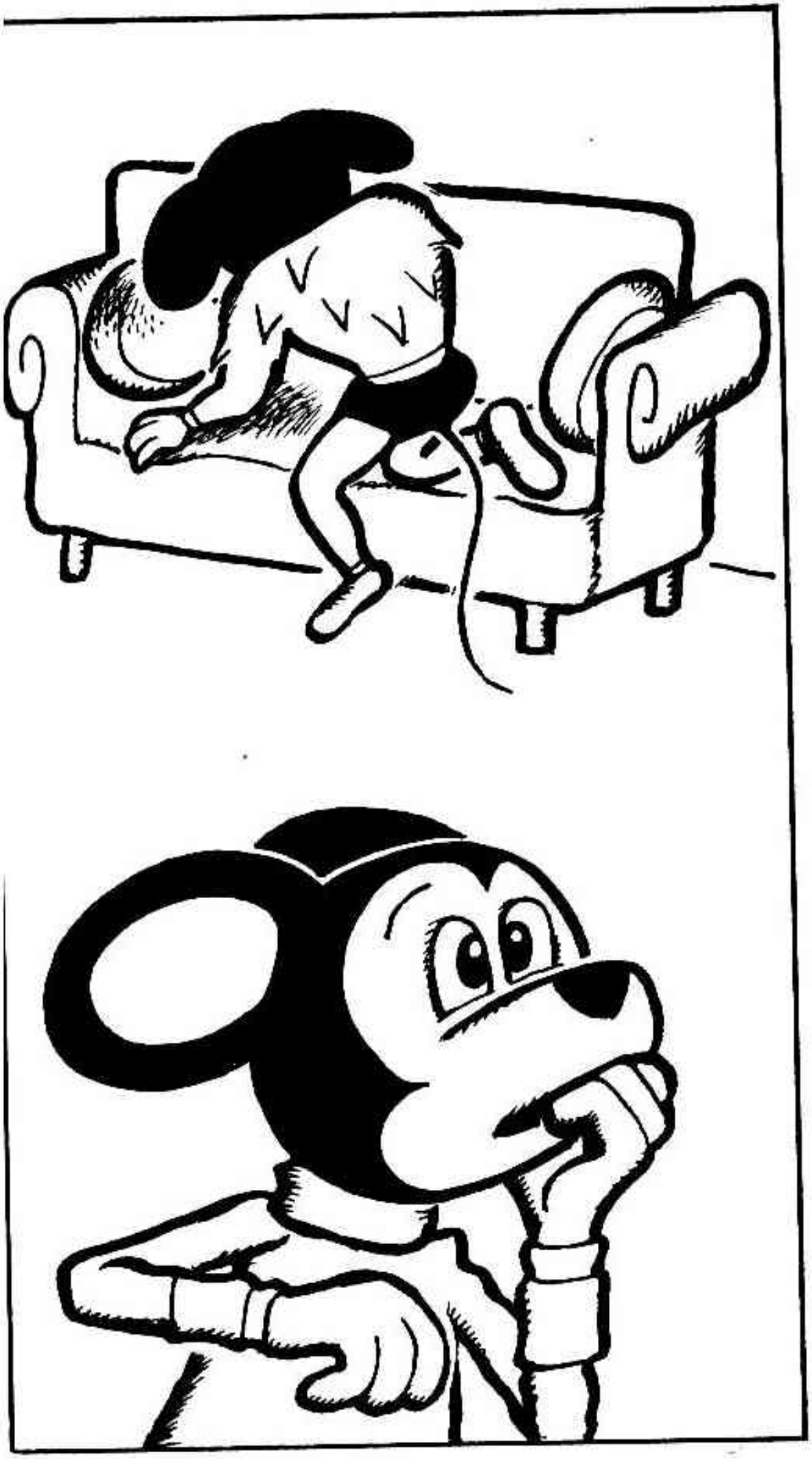


you get away and get back here?" he went on.

"I hid," answered the crime fighter. "After they stopped looking, I stumbled around the mountain until daylight, and a trucker gave me a ride into Mouseville."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Alpha Field. "I've been so busy thinking about you, I've overlooked the BIG problem! It isn't just our teen-agers, this concerns the whole world! The next question is, what can we do to stop her?"

"I'm not sure yet," replied Mighty Mouse. "I want a short nap now. While I nap, I want you to get together some of your population and have them here in two hours, at which time you will awaken me."



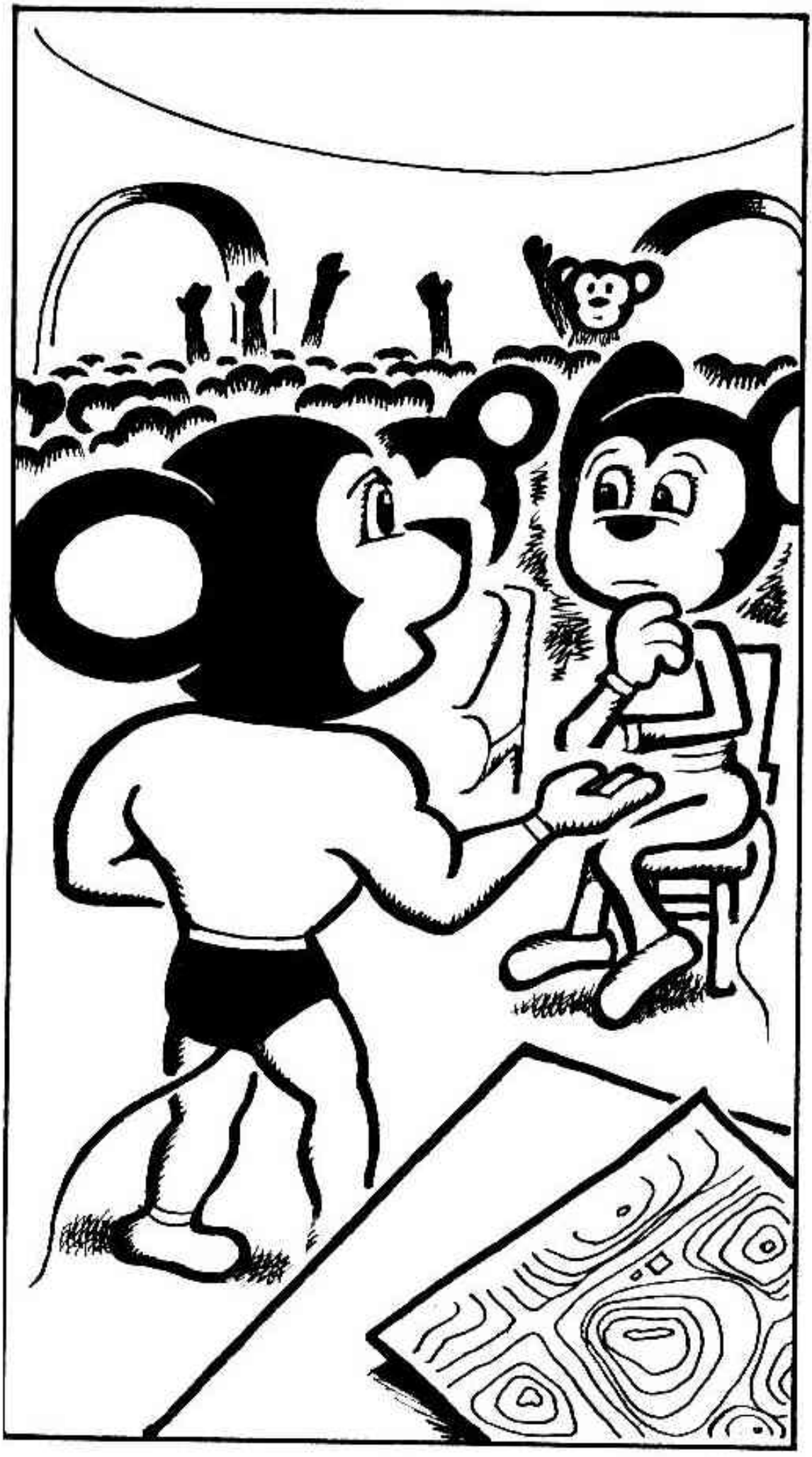
When Mighty Mouse was awakened, he strode into the living room. There, about thirty mice were waiting.

Without any preliminary, he said, "You're here because we need your help. If Alpha's done what I requested, you're all experienced in those mountains. I'm going to describe to you the location of a huge cave. If any of you have ever seen it or been in it, please say so."

Immediately, hands went up. One mouse said, "Most of us know where it is. It's called Bottomless Cave because it's so deep."

"Good!" said Mighty Mouse. "Now, do any of you know of another entrance? Probably much higher up on the mountain?

"There must be FIFTY other

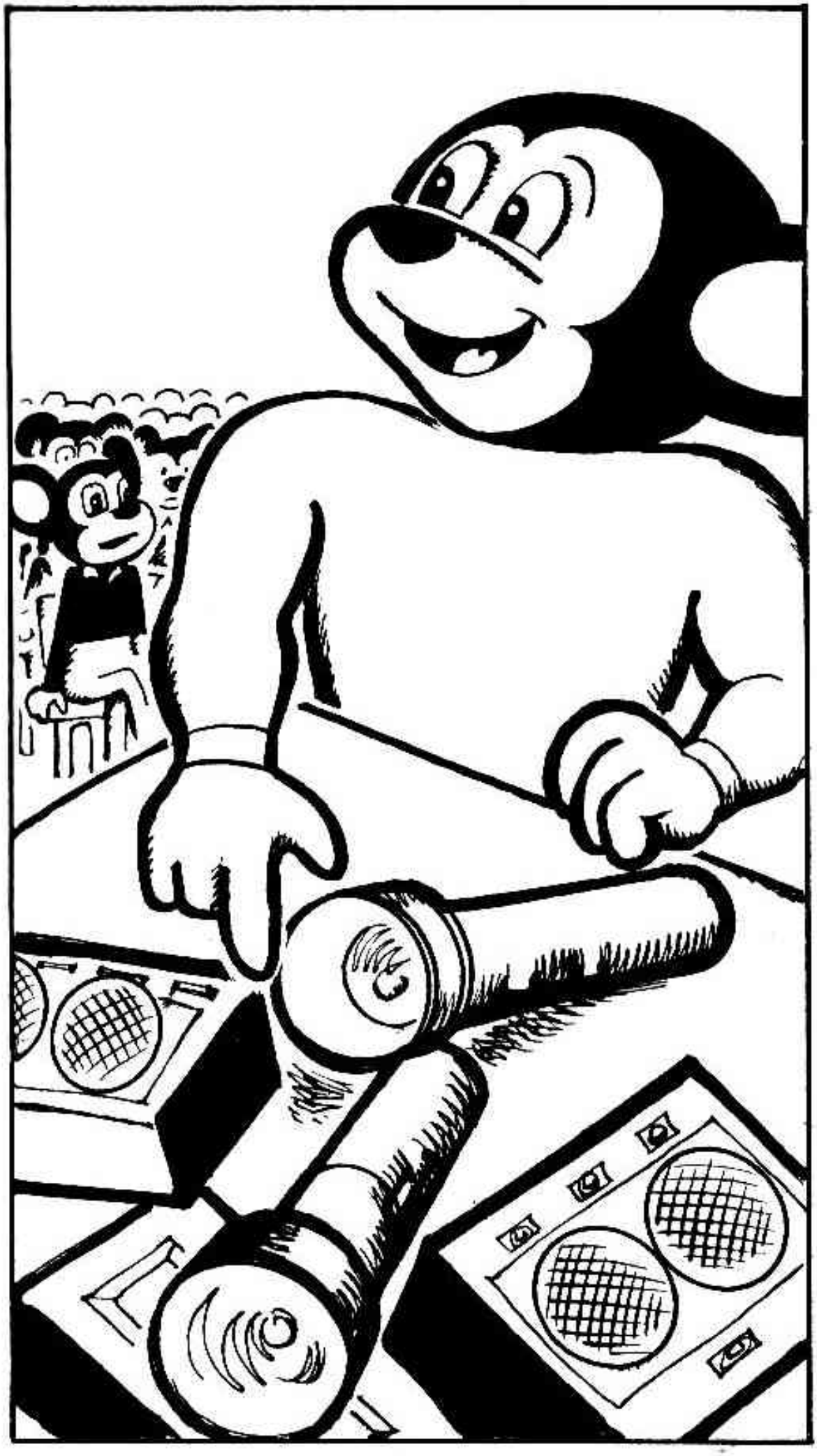


entrances! Bottomless Cave is the ONLY cave in that particular mountain, and there are small openings all over the mountain up above the cave."

Said Mighty Mouse, "Are they large enough for a mouse to go through, but too small for anything larger?"

There was a general nodding of heads in agreement. "That's about it," the first mouse replied. "We could get through, but a cat or dog or anything larger couldn't."

"Good!" cried Mighty Mouse. "Exactly what I was hoping for! Now for the important JOB! By tomorrow night, I want one of you inside each of those small entrances. Every one of you will be carrying a tape-playback machine and a flashlight. When

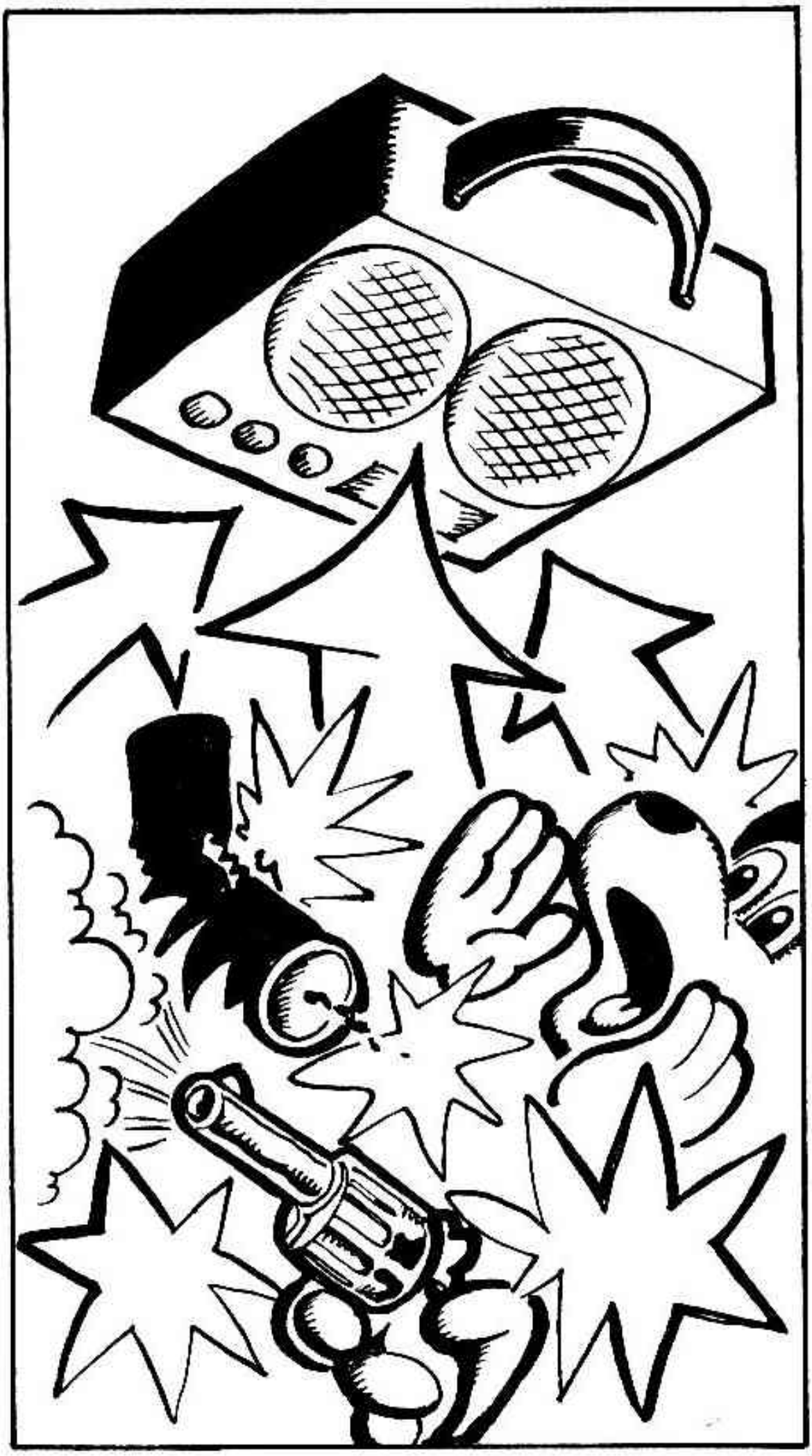


you hear me shout NOW! turn on those tape machines and the flashlights INSTANTLY! You'll be in no danger, because nothing big enough to harm you can get into those small openings. Is that clear?"

He then turned to Alpha Field, who said, "What can I do?"

"Two things," was the answer. "First, a set of tapes for those playback machines and a flashlight for each member of the party. I want the loudest noises you can find recorded on those tapes. Explosions, war and battle noises, unearthly screams! I want enough noise in that cave to create confusion. If what I have in mind works out, I'll need that much diversion."

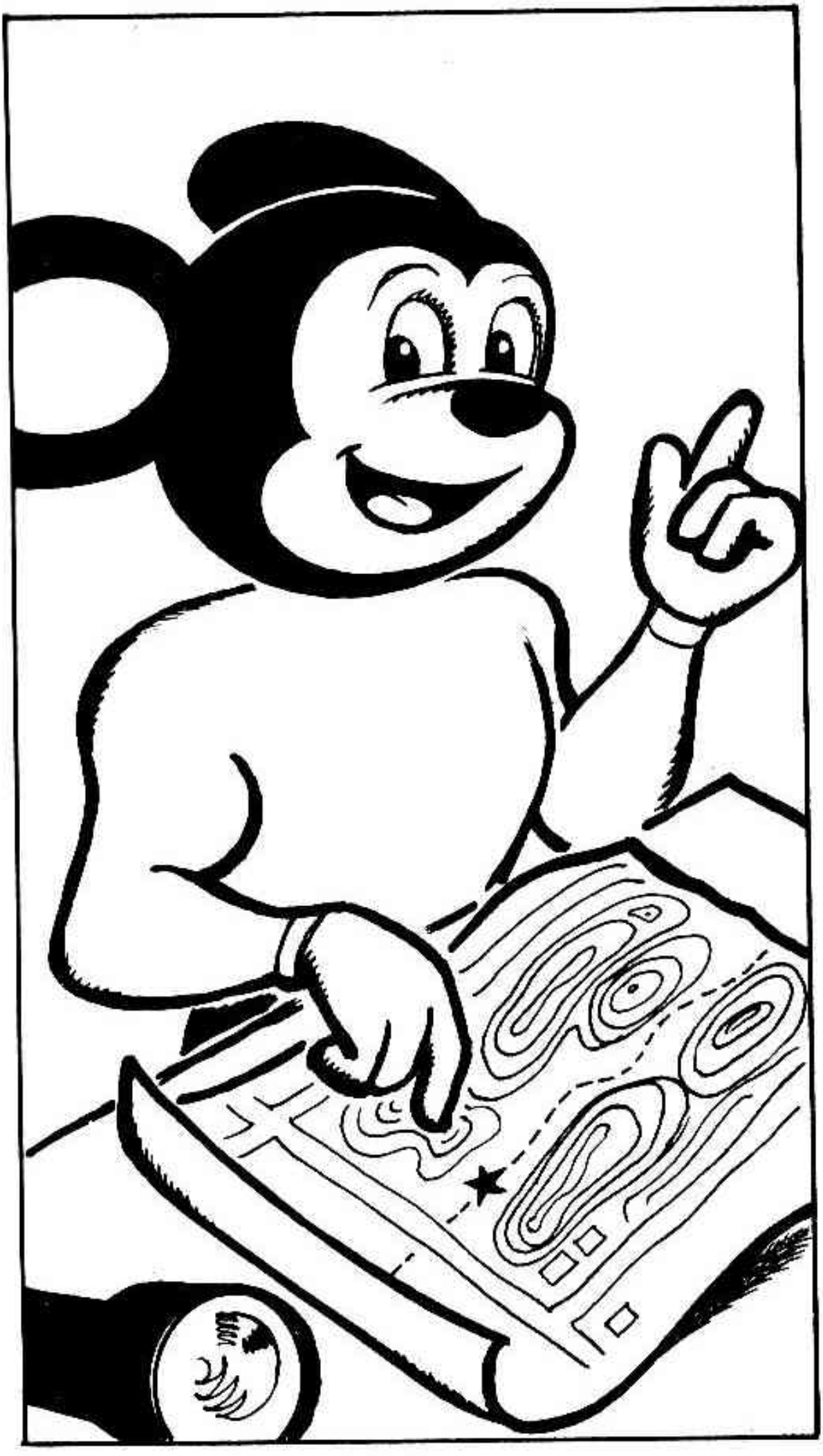
"What's the second thing?" asked Alpha Field.



"I want one of the mountain party to stay outside of any one of those small openings. When he hears the noise from the tapes, he's to be instructed to turn on his flashlight, pointing DOWN the mountain. When you see that light, cut the cable at once. I'll give you a map showing you where the cable runs."

"I'll do exactly as you order," said Alpha Mouse. "But what will it accomplish? According to Hildegarde Hogge, the treadmill gives her her power!"

"I don't believe it," replied Mighty Mouse. "I don't think it does all of the job. Remember what you told me about the lights dimming during the circus performance? I think that happened because she needed

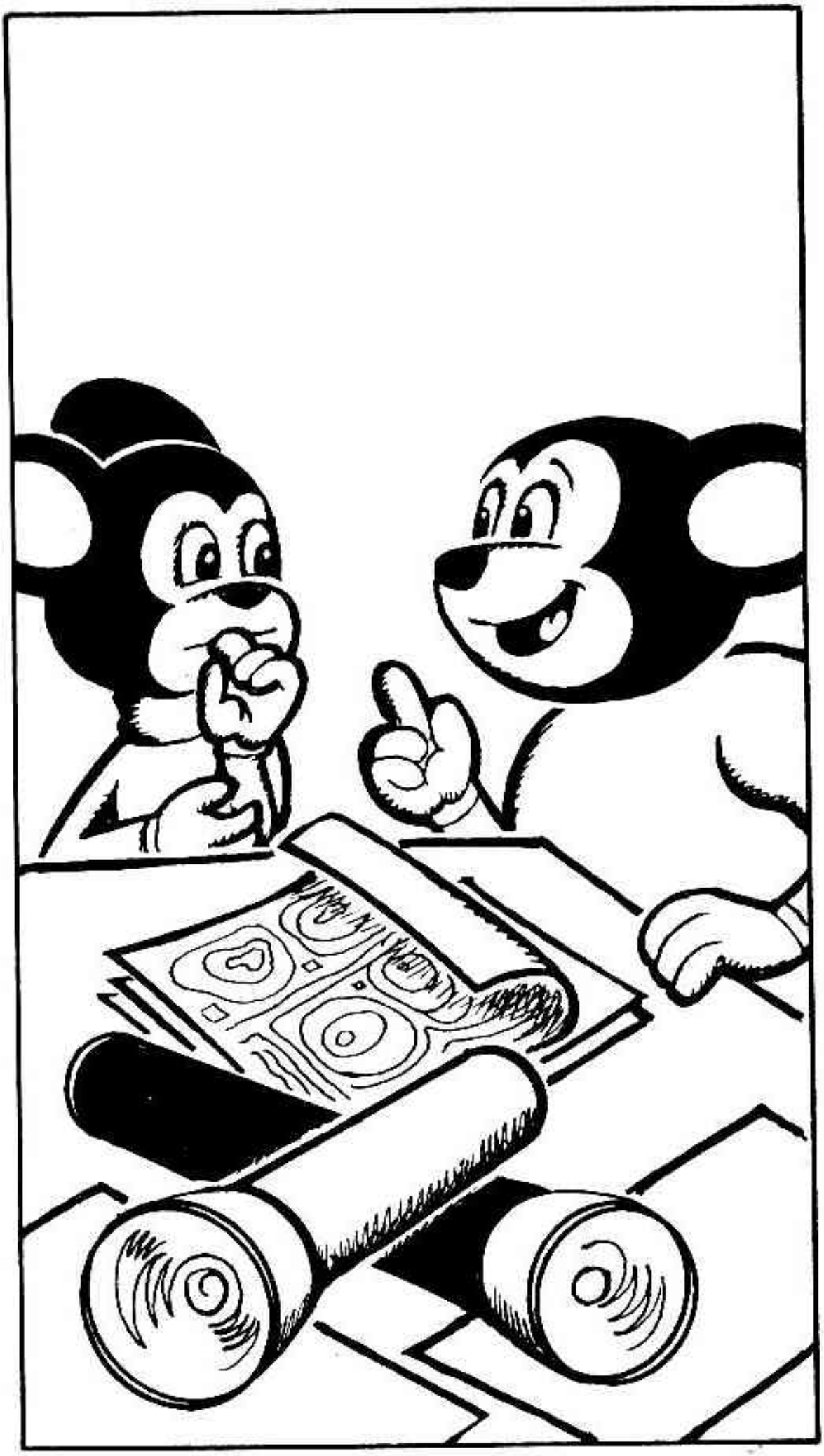


a lot more power and started drawing from the circus power source!"

"I understand that," Alpha Mouse said, "but why the flashlights? The treadmill will supply light, as well as most of the other power she needs!"

"Because, my friend," Mighty Mouse answered, "very shortly after the noise begins and you cut the cable from the circus, those young mice are coming OFF that treadmill, and when it stops, so does her electrical power. I don't want her to be able to switch over to the line from the circus!"

"I see," said Alpha Mouse quietly. "Now here is my most important question. What are YOU going to do? What CAN you do, stripped of your extra-ordinary powers by the loss of



your cape?"

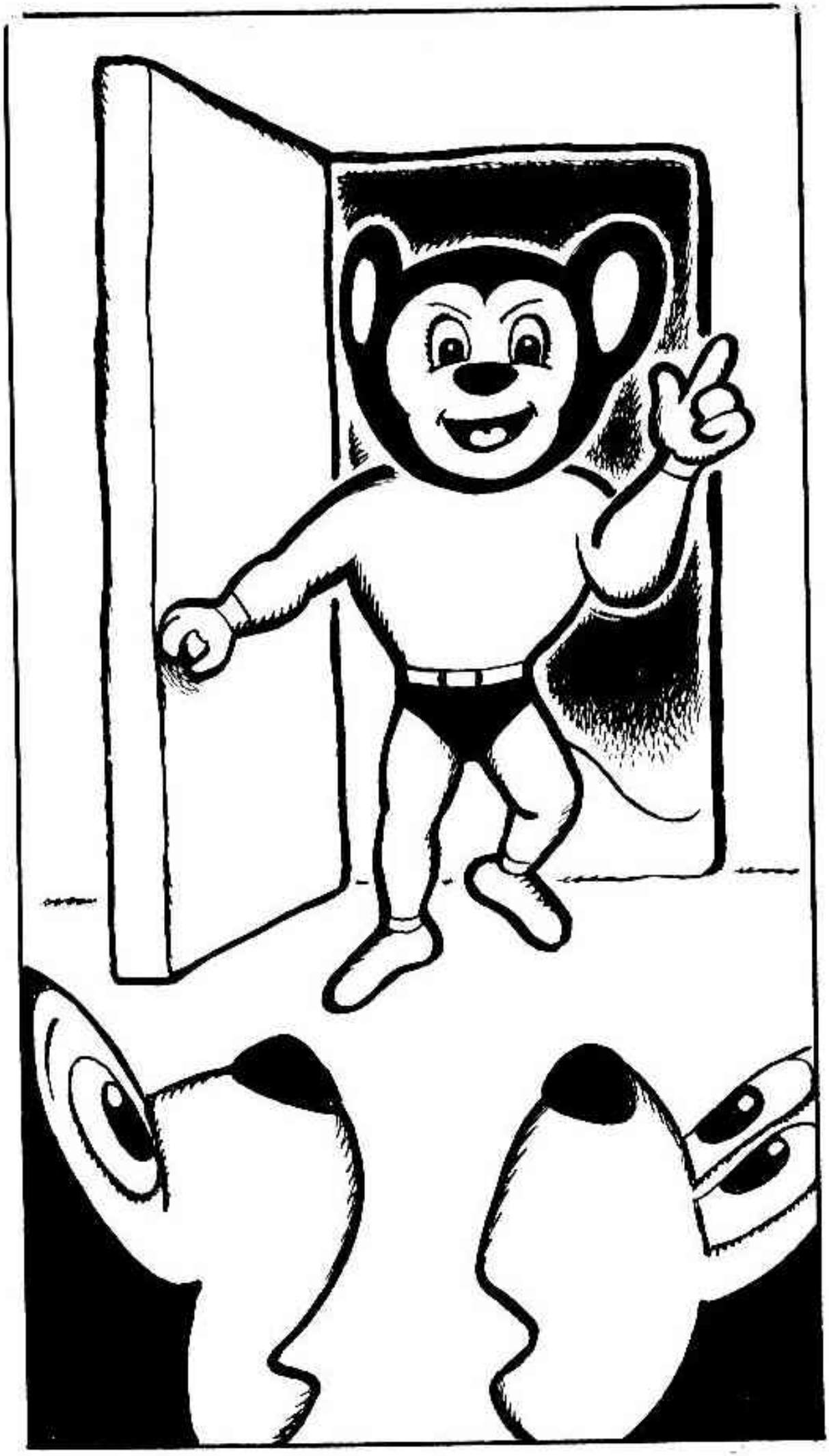
"This may be a bit hard to explain," began Mighty Mouse. "The young mice who are being held captive are your best young mice. They represent a tremendous force for good among us. I believe that, working together, they can accomplish anything they put their heart, soul and minds to. I'm going to put it to the supreme test tomorrow night."

"What's your plan?" asked Alpha Mouse.

"I'm going to let myself be captured!" answered Mighty Mouse. At Alpha Mouse's amazed and horrified gasp, he added, "I must get to them! And this is the only way!"

Then Mighty Mouse went out the door.

That night Mighty Mouse was



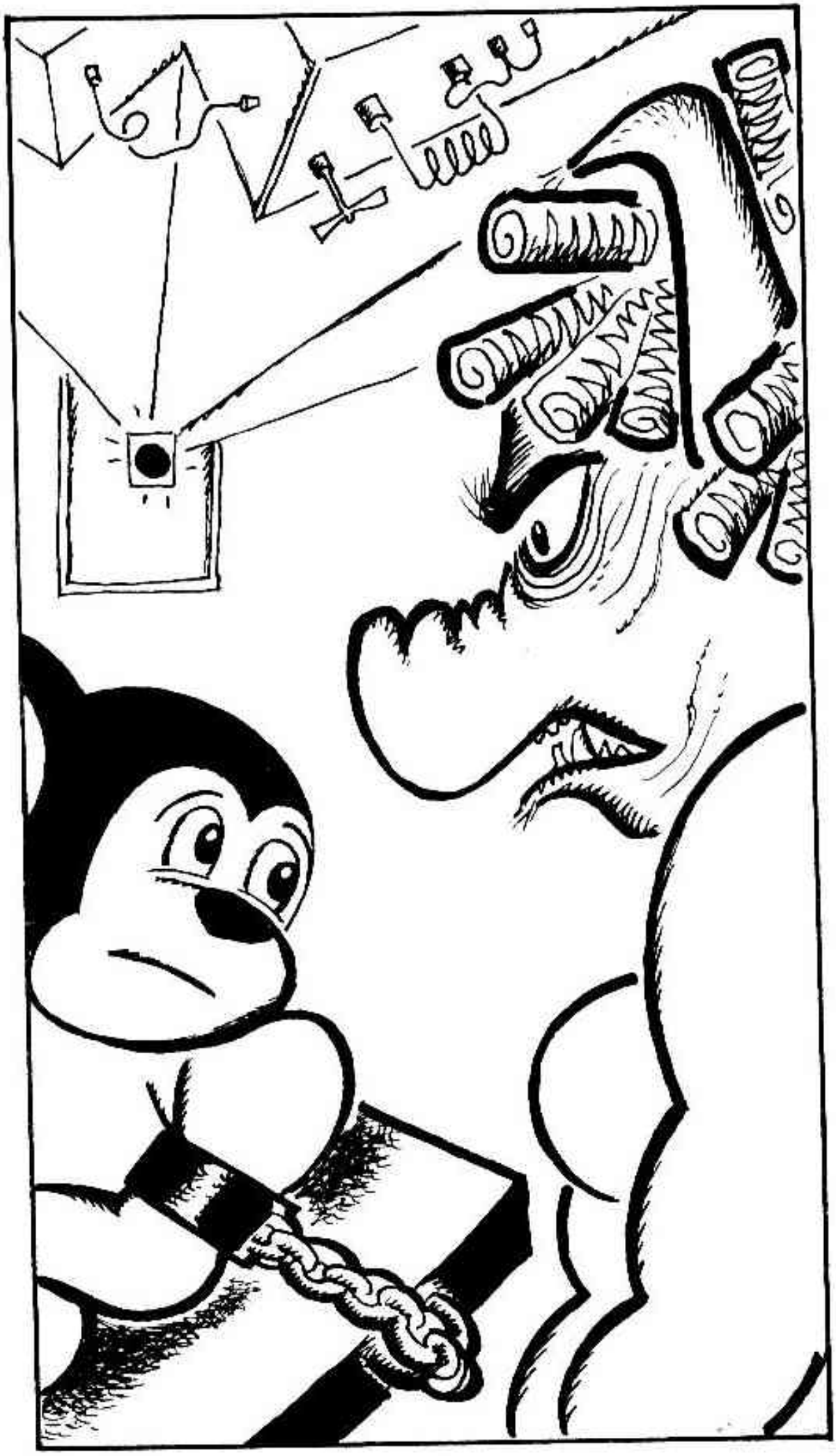
climbing to the cave mouth. Shortly thereafter, he was sighted by two Boare guards, who promptly knocked him out with gas. As he had expected, he was taken at once to the laboratory of Hildegarde Hogge. He awakened an hour later.

"Well! I notice that you are impressed by my size, if not my abilities, Mighty Mouse!" Hildegarde Hogge said.

"Wrong on both counts!" snapped Mighty Mouse. "Size means nothing at all! And your abilities are remarkable, but worthless in the hands of a lunatic!"

"I think," said Hildegarde Hogge, "that you need a little time on the treadmill to take some of the starch out of you."

"Before I go," said Mighty Mouse, "and since your plans



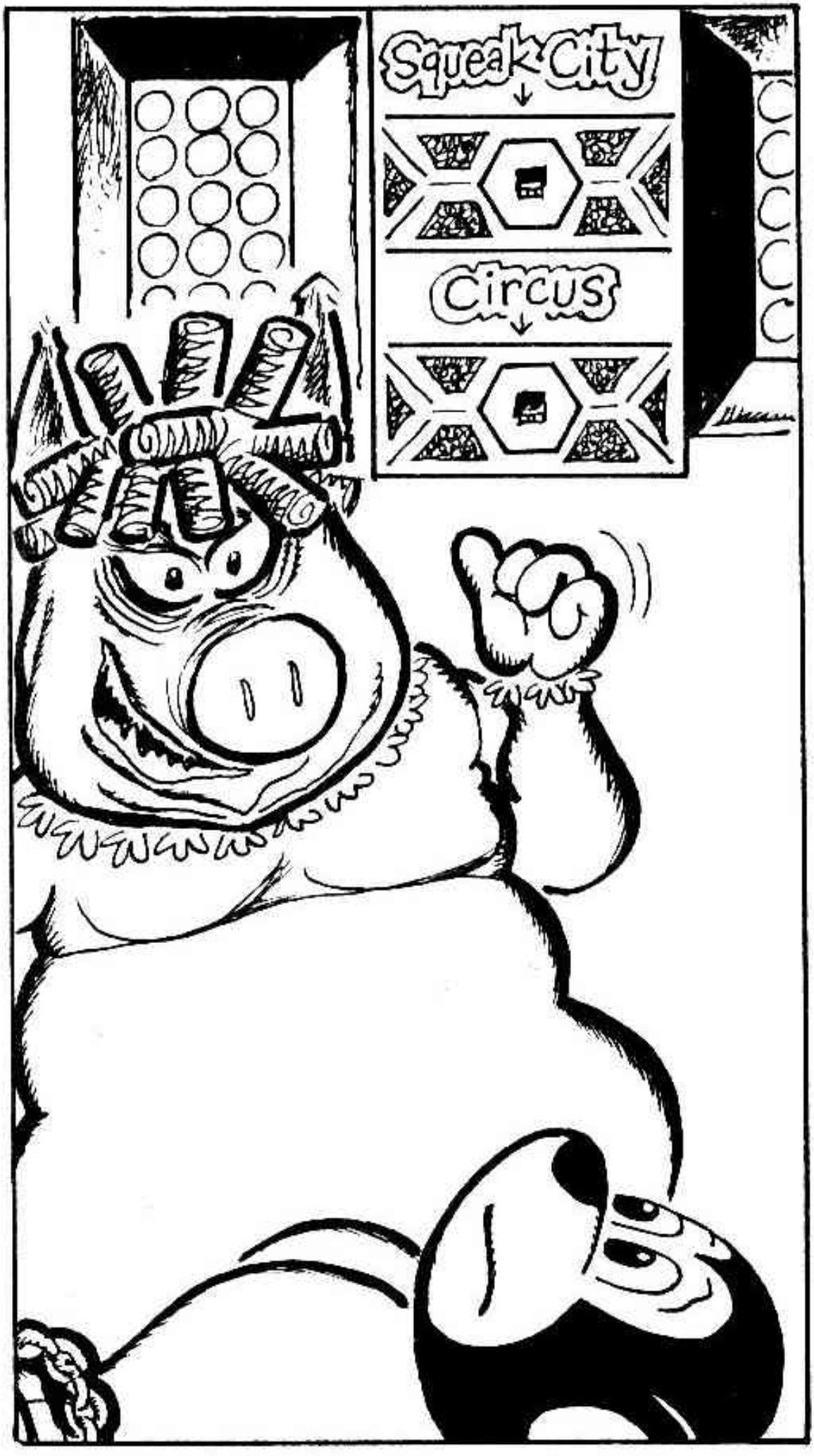
undoubtedly include my extermination anyhow, perhaps you'll gratify my curiosity about something."

"Why not?" said Hildegarde Hogge.

"Why the circus?" asked Mighty Mouse. "What purpose does it serve?"

"I should have thought the answer to that would be obvious to one with your super-powers! But then, you're not quite so super any more, are you? The circus," she continued, "provides excellent cover. In addition, while the treadmill provides me with most of the power I need, there are certain occasions when I need more. At those times, I can draw power from the Squeak City power company through the cable to the circus lot!"

"Then why the treadmill? The


Squeak City
Circus

power company could supply all you need by itself!" Mighty Mouse asked.

"Along with your super powers, you seem to have lost your brains as well!" roared Hildegarde Hogge. "The power company would notice very quickly that the circus was drawing a lot more power than it was using! I took no chances on anyone becoming suspicious and poking their noses into my business!"

"Ah, but a lot of us are now poking our noses into your business!" cried Mighty Mouse.

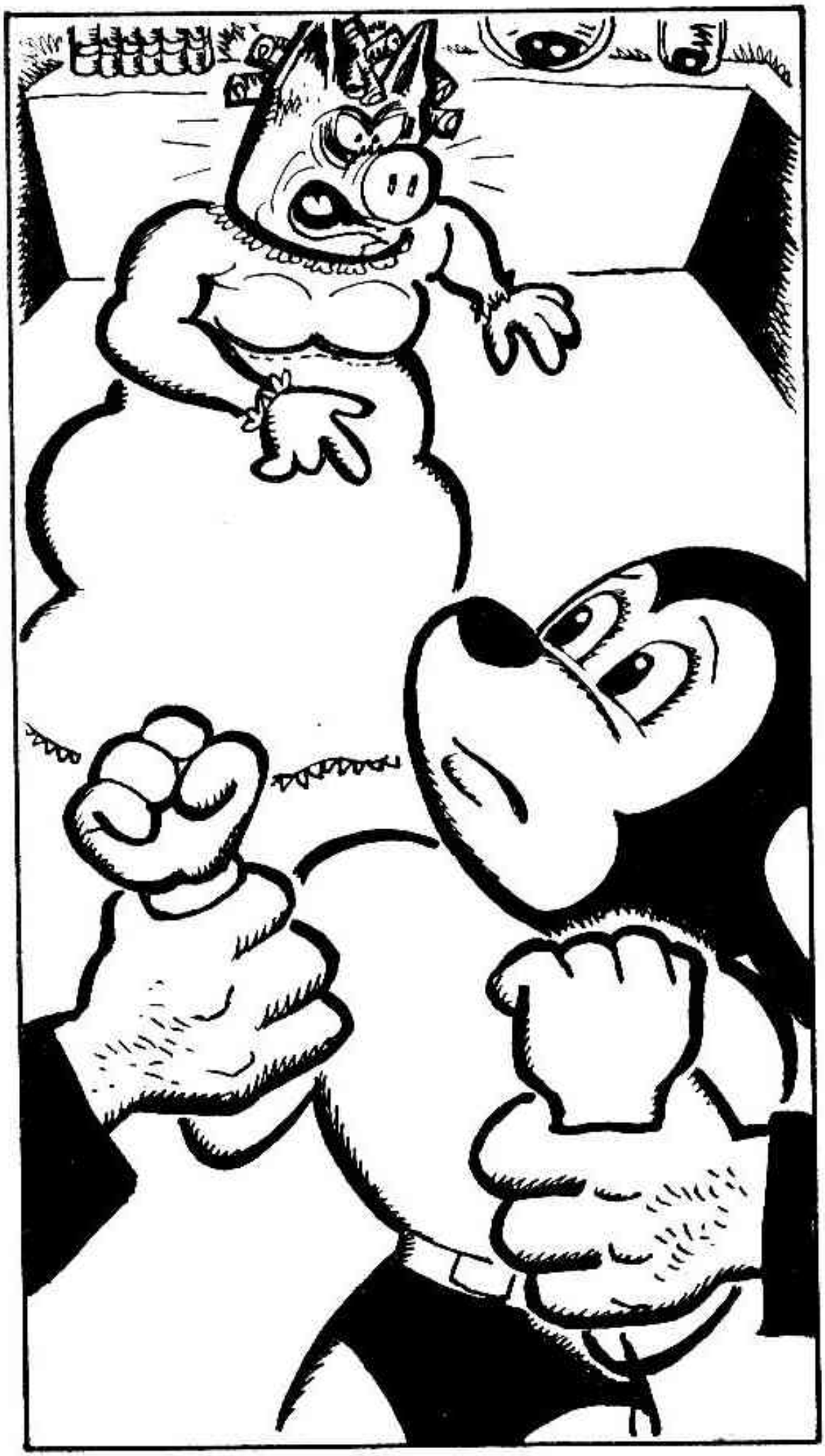
"Poke away!" was the triumphant answer. "It's far too late to stop me now! The heads of every government on earth have been informed of what's in store for them if they don't surrender control of EVERYTHING to me! Naturally, they're not

going to believe it, so I have arranged a little demonstration for them, one in which YOU will be interested!

"Tomorrow morning Mouseville will be destroyed, and its entire population as well! And one hour later, if each and every one of my demands have not been met, the capital city of a major country will go, exactly as Mouseville is going to go. And every hour after that, another capital city. How long do you think it will take before they come to terms, MY terms?" she concluded.

"I think you'd better take me to the treadmill," said Mighty Mouse. "The very sight of you sickens me!"

"Guards!" roared Hildegarde Hogge. "Take PUNY mouse away!"



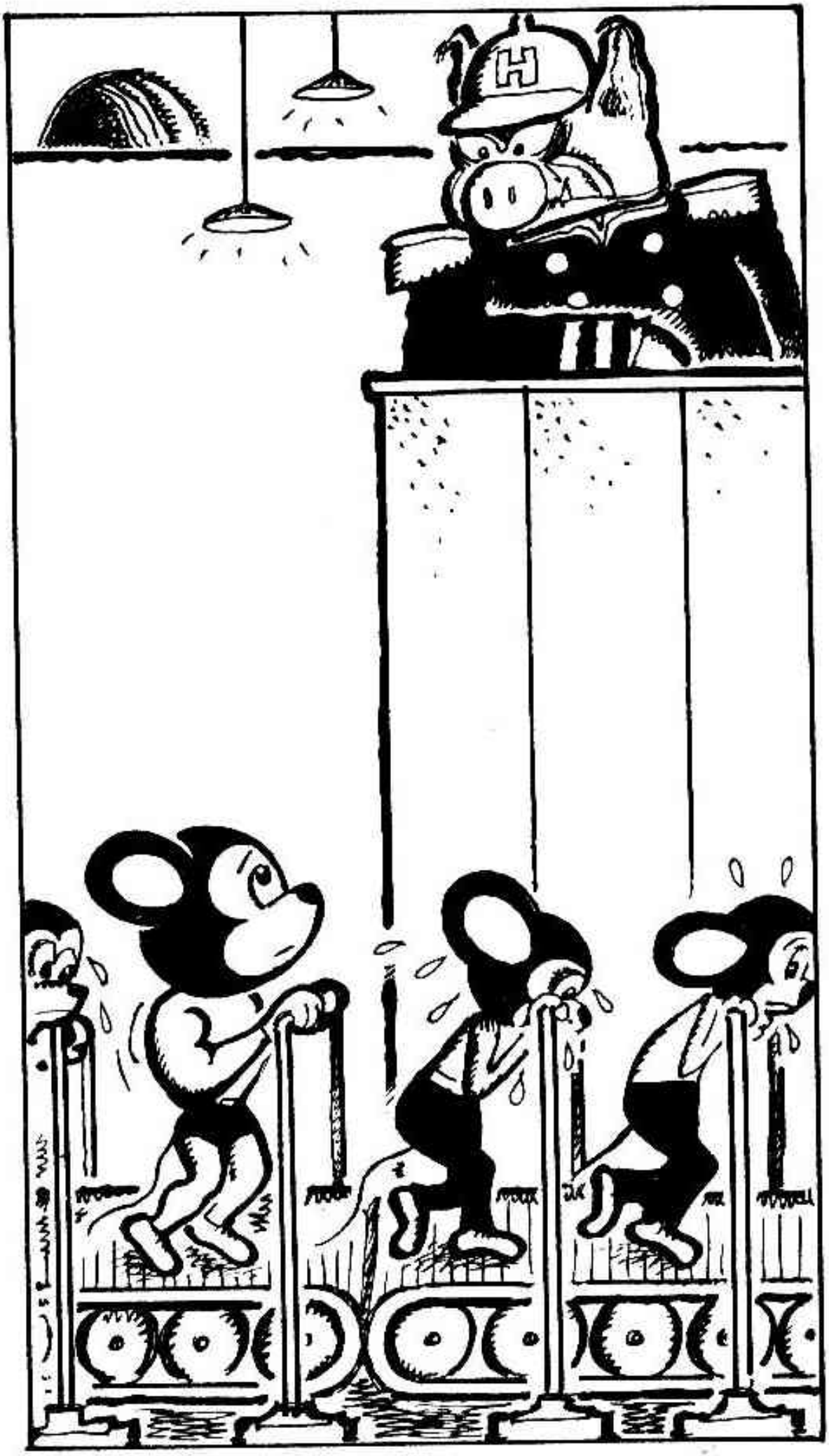
Five minutes later, Mighty Mouse was on the treadmill along with over two hundred teen-aged mice!

As soon as he saw the Boares attention diverted from him, Mighty Mouse began to talk earnestly to the half-dozen young mice near enough to hear his whispered words.

"We're all going to get out of here," he began, "but you're going to have to help, each of you. Remember what I tell you and pass it along to everyone on the treadmill. As each new shift comes on, I'll tell them, too! Understood?"

"We understand, Mighty Mouse! What can we do?" came a whispered voice.

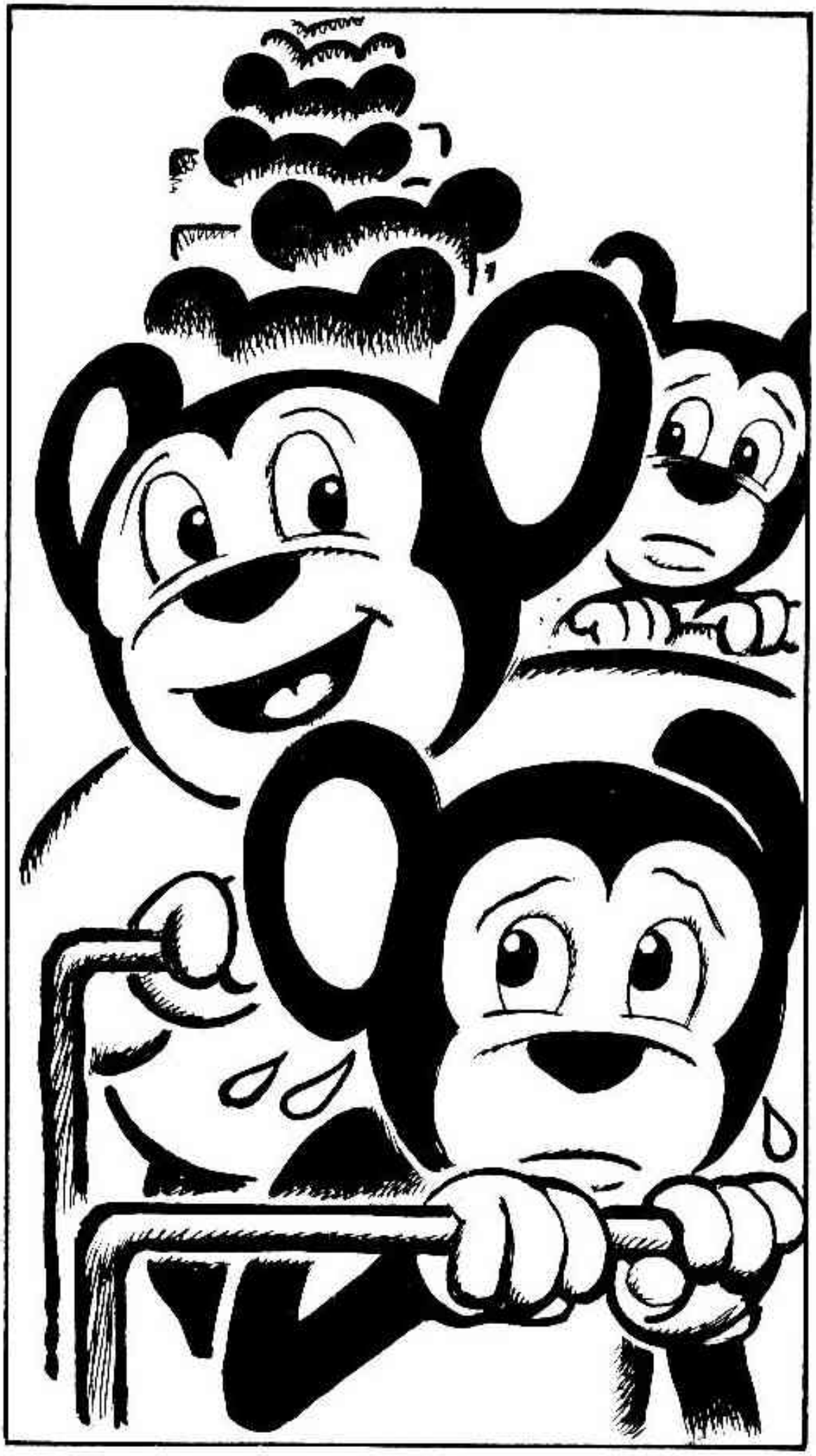
"You must believe in me," whispered Mighty Mouse, "with



all your heart and soul. You must believe that even without my cape, I can recover my super-powers long enough for a plan I have in mind to work! You must BELIEVE and think of NOTHING ELSE from now until we're all out of here!"

"Can you tell us your plan, Mighty Mouse?" asked one of the captive mice.

"I can tell you your part of the plan," was the whispered reply. "When you hear me shout NOW! things are going to happen in a big hurry! When you hear that shout, everyone must get OFF the treadmill, fast! This cavern will go completely dark at that point, and you'll hear a tremendous amount of noise. Pay no attention to the noise. That's merely to distract the guards. At the same time, you'll notice some



points of light in the roof of the cavern. You must then head for the cavern walls and climb them quickly. Head for the lights. Once you reach the lights, you'll be safe. Those of you who WON'T be on the treadmill must do the same."

"We've got it!" whispered half a dozen young voices.

"Remember two things," was Mighty Mouse's final instruction. "First, Be ready to move the instant you hear my shout and the cavern goes dark! Second, and most important of all, BELIEVE IN ME! Believe I can recover my super-powers! Believe it, and don't stop! Think of nothing else—all of our lives depend on it! You're about to become the most important part of a NEW kind of force in the world, MOUSE POWER!"

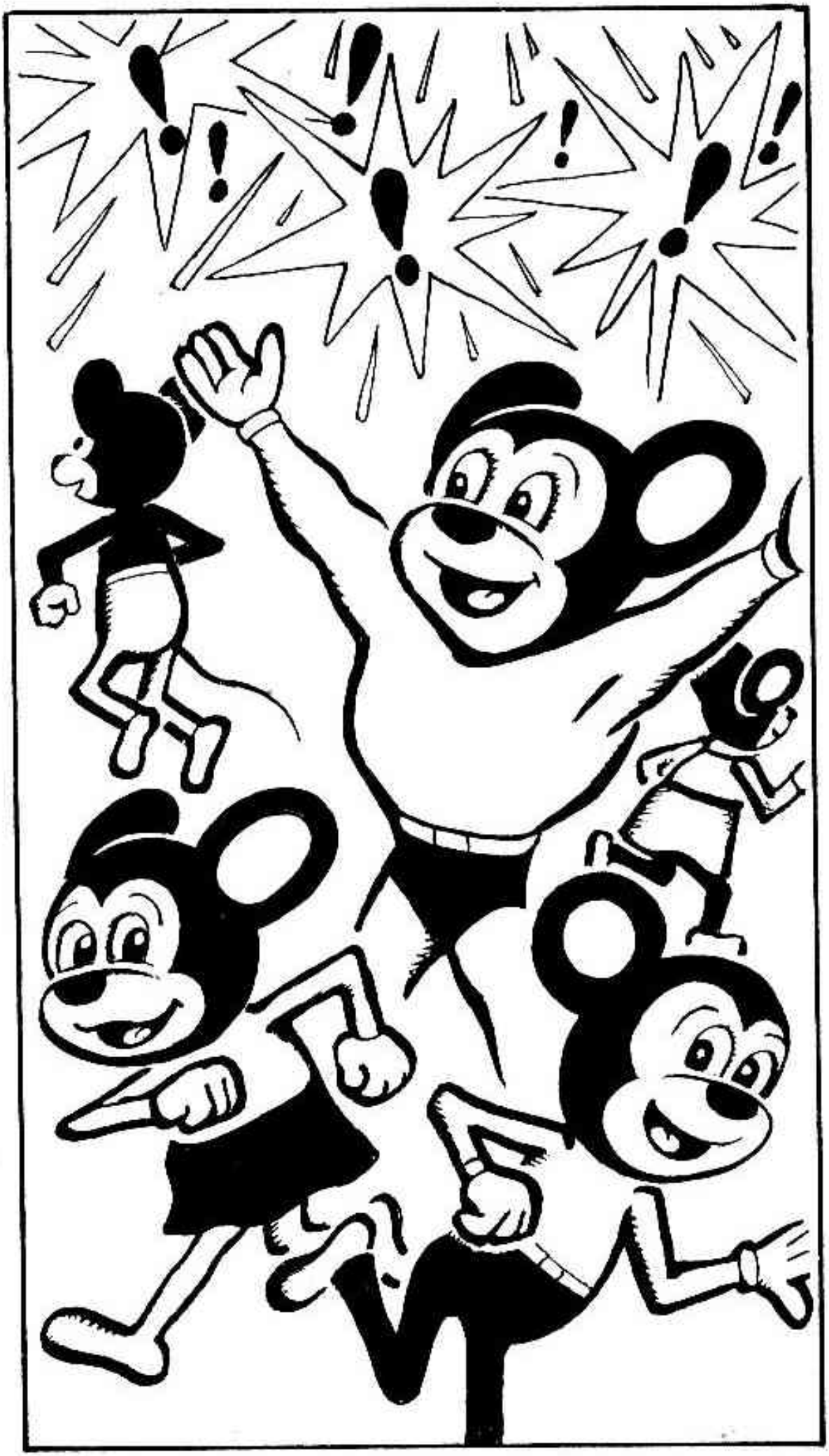
For two more hours, Mighty Mouse labored with the young mice on Hildegarde Hogge's monstrous treadmill. Only then did he realize what physical torture the young mice had endured for those four long, weary months of back-breaking drudgery. When the shift ended, he whispered, "Good-bye, good luck, and KEEP BELIEVING! And when you hear me shout NOW, concentrate! Concentrate on your belief in me!"

The new shift of young mice came as the old shift departed. Mighty Mouse repeated his instructions. When he had completed the instructions to the young mice closest to him, he waited until he was sure that the word had been passed along to every one of the mice on the treadmill.

He gave one last look around at the teen-aged mice and saw the hope and trust in their eyes. And then he shouted, "NOW!" in a voice which echoed through the entire vast cavern.

Almost instantly, he felt an enormous surge of super-power as the combined and concentrated force of the hope, and faith and BELIEF of the young mice poured into his mind and body.

Things, indeed, began to happen in a hurry. The teenagers dropped off the treadmill, and as the lights went dimmer and dimmer and finally went out, a horrible noise howled through the cavern as thirty tape playbacks were turned on. In her laboratory, Hildegarde Hogge screamed, "Switch over to the line from the circus!" But at that moment,



Alpha Field got his flashlight signal and cut the cable! The guards, the fearsome Boares, dashed back and forth, crashing into one another in mad confusion. At the very top of the cavern, thirty flashlights winked on.

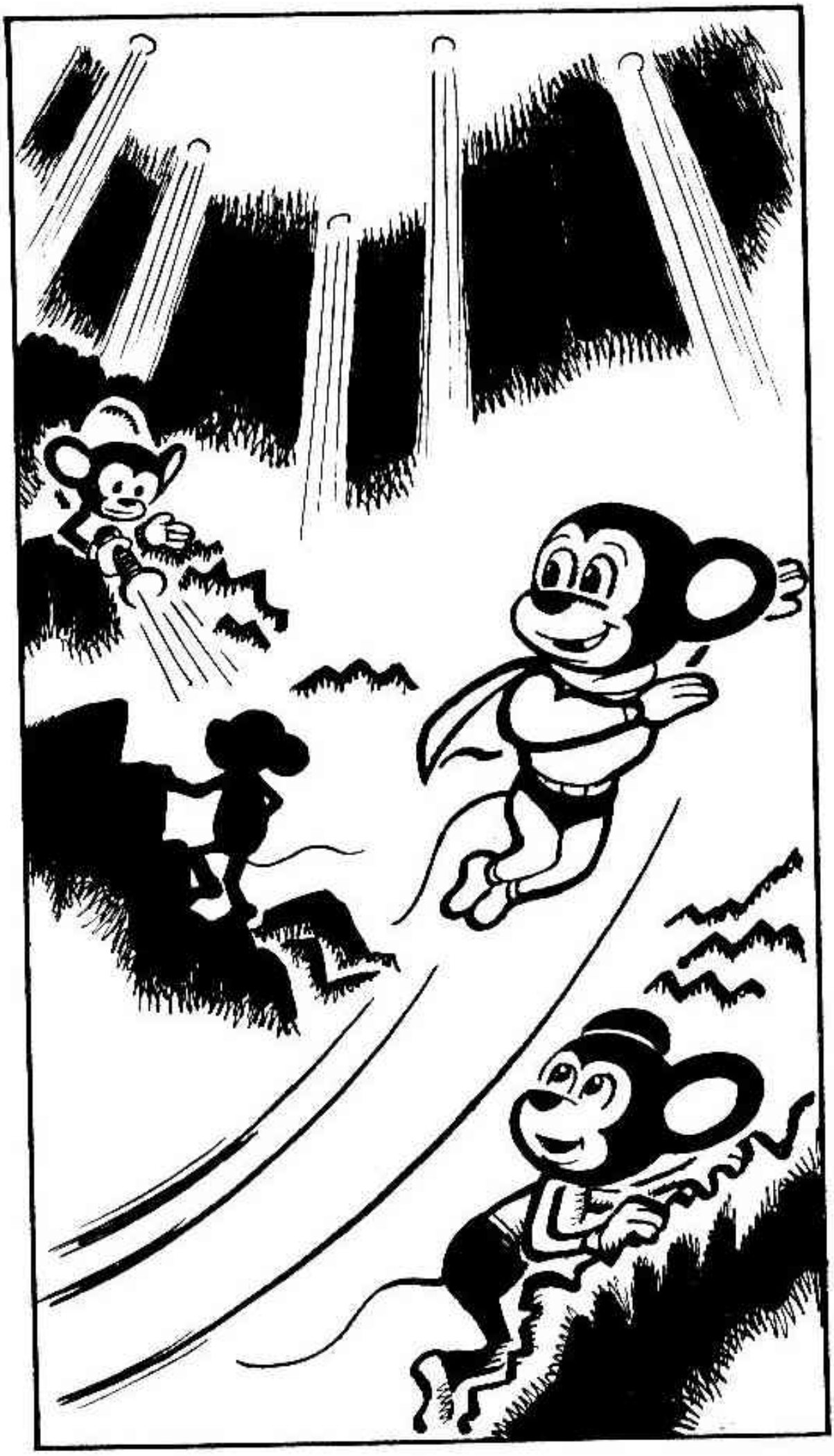
And then Mighty Mouse rose from the cavern floor and flew — yes, FLEW — straight to the thick glass walls of Hildegarde Hogge's laboratory. With one mighty blow he shattered them and using his super-vision, recovered his cape off the wall! Immediately, he felt the full impact as his super-powers came back in full force! Then, ignoring the furious screaming and bellowing from Hildegarde Hogge and her guards, he dashed to a dozen different places in the laboratory,

making certain changes in dial settings, pulling certain wires loose, and connecting others.

Once this was done, he flew out of the laboratory and back into the cavern, circling about and helping any of the young mice who were having trouble climbing the walls in the dim light from the flashlights.

Once he had seen the last of them into the escape holes, he told the mice holding the flashlights, "You, all of you, have a very short time to get off this mountain! I don't care how tired any of you are. If you want to live, GET OFF THIS MOUNTAIN!"

And then he flew across the huge cavern into the opening he had used the first time he had entered. He made short work of the confused Boares still on duty there and raced to the cave

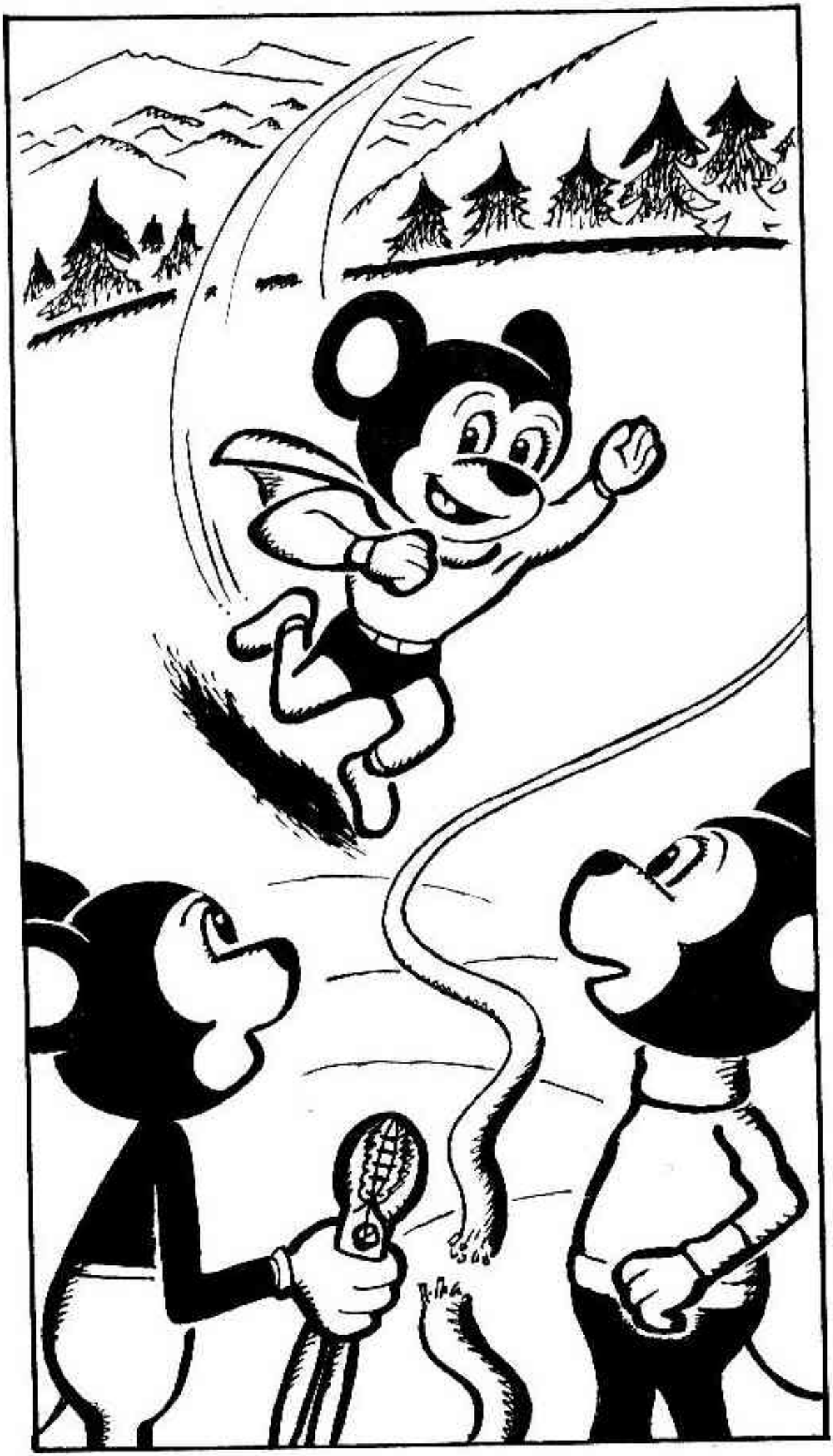


mouth. Once there, he sprang lightly into the air and soared to the area where the young mice were pouring out of the small openings. Finally, when he saw they were well on their way off the mountain, he swooped to the foothills and landed where Alpha Field and his nephew, Delta^{21} Field, were standing guard over the cut cable.

"Whew!" said Alpha Field. "Am I glad to see you! We heard a lot of noise, but nothing else! Are our young ones all right?"

"They're all out of that infernal cave and out of Hildegarde Hogge's clutches!" replied Mighty Mouse. "By this time, they're well off the mountain. Are the trucks waiting at the road?"

Motors running and ready to go!" replied Delta^{21} Field. "I took care of that myself!"



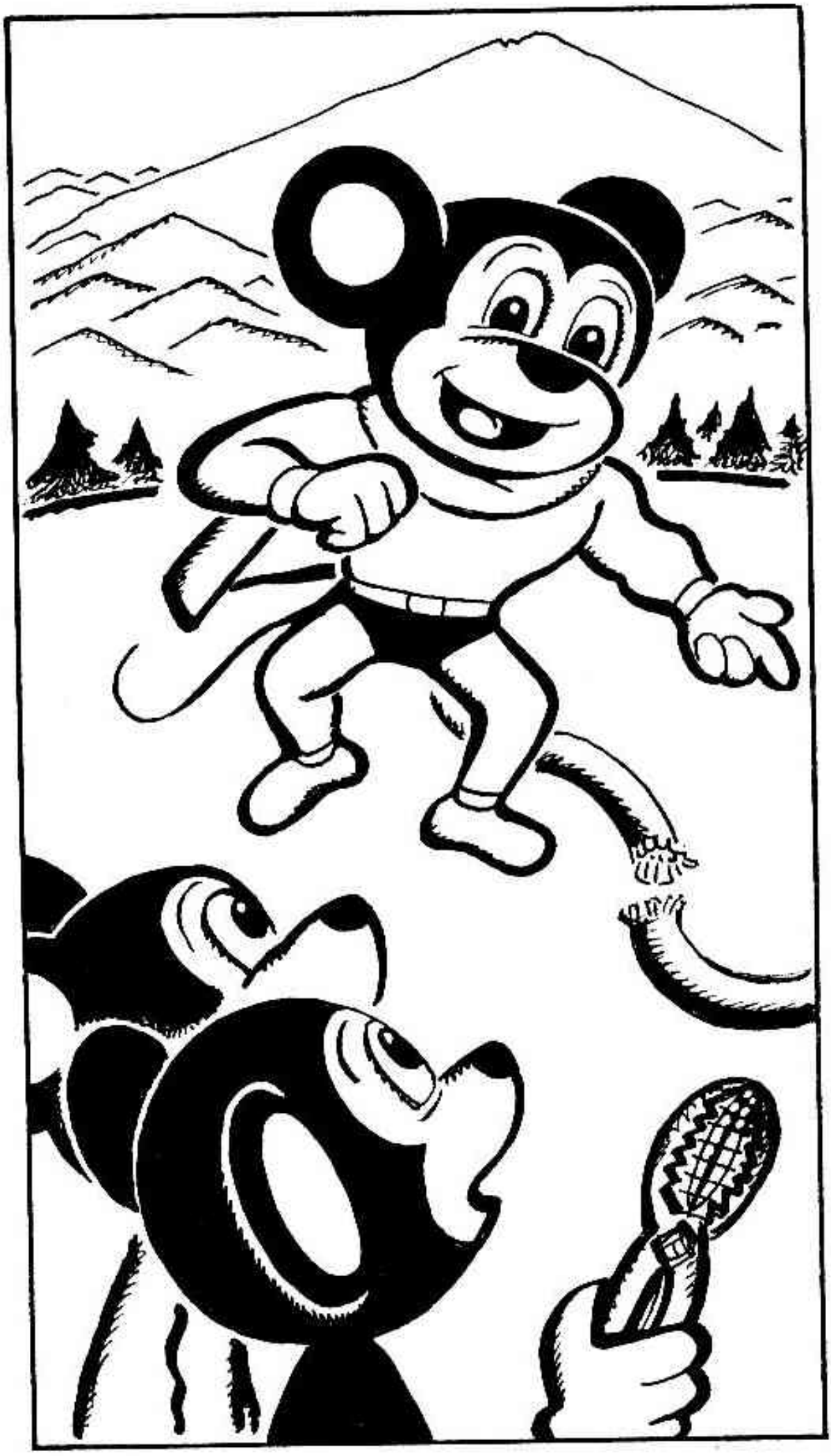
"Good!" replied Mighty Mouse. "Now, for the next and final step!"

"What do you want us to do?" asked Alpha Field.

"The biggest job for you right now," answered Mighty Mouse, "is to skedaddle out of these foothills and off this mountain! I'm going to put Hildegarde Hogge and her gang out of business forever!"

"What's going to happen? Can't she get her laboratory going again?" Delta[21] Field wanted to know.

"I've made a few changes in that laboratory, under cover of the same confusion that enabled your young ones to escape. While the cavern was dark, she couldn't see, but I could! Now, scat, both of you! Get down to somewhere near the circus



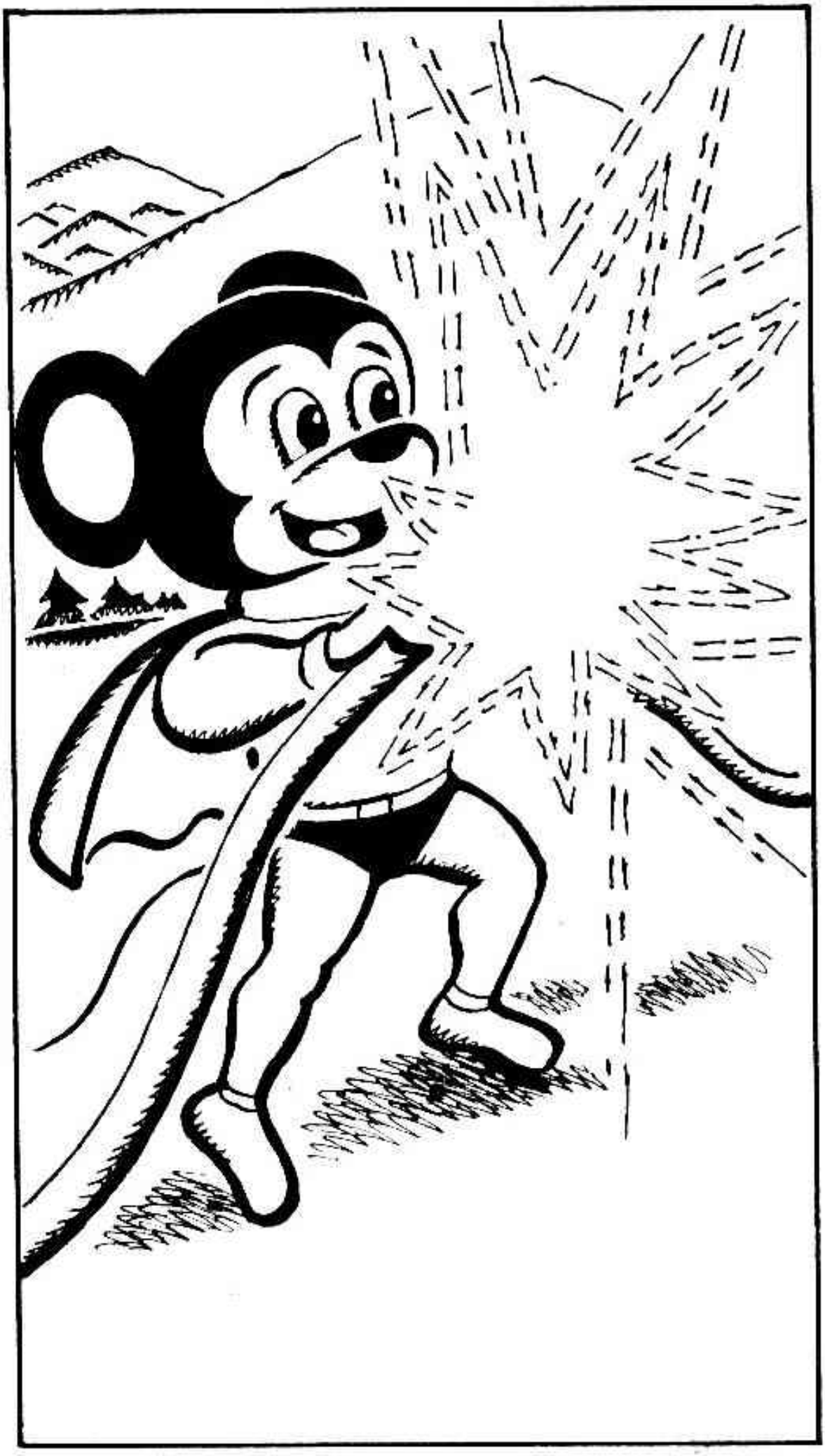
grounds and look and listen!"

"We're on our way!" shouted Alpha Field as he and his nephew left in a hurry, racing toward the circus grounds.

Mighty Mouse, using his super-vision, watched until they were in the clear. Then he picked up the two ends of the cable, pushed them together, and with one mighty effort, FUSED them until the cable was in one piece again. Electrical current immediately began to flow through the cable once more, up the side of the mountain and into the cavern. Instantly the lights went on in the cavern and Hildegard Hogge's laboratory.

She took one look around and saw the blasted glass which had surrounded the laboratory.

"Blast him! Double blast him! How did he get up here to break



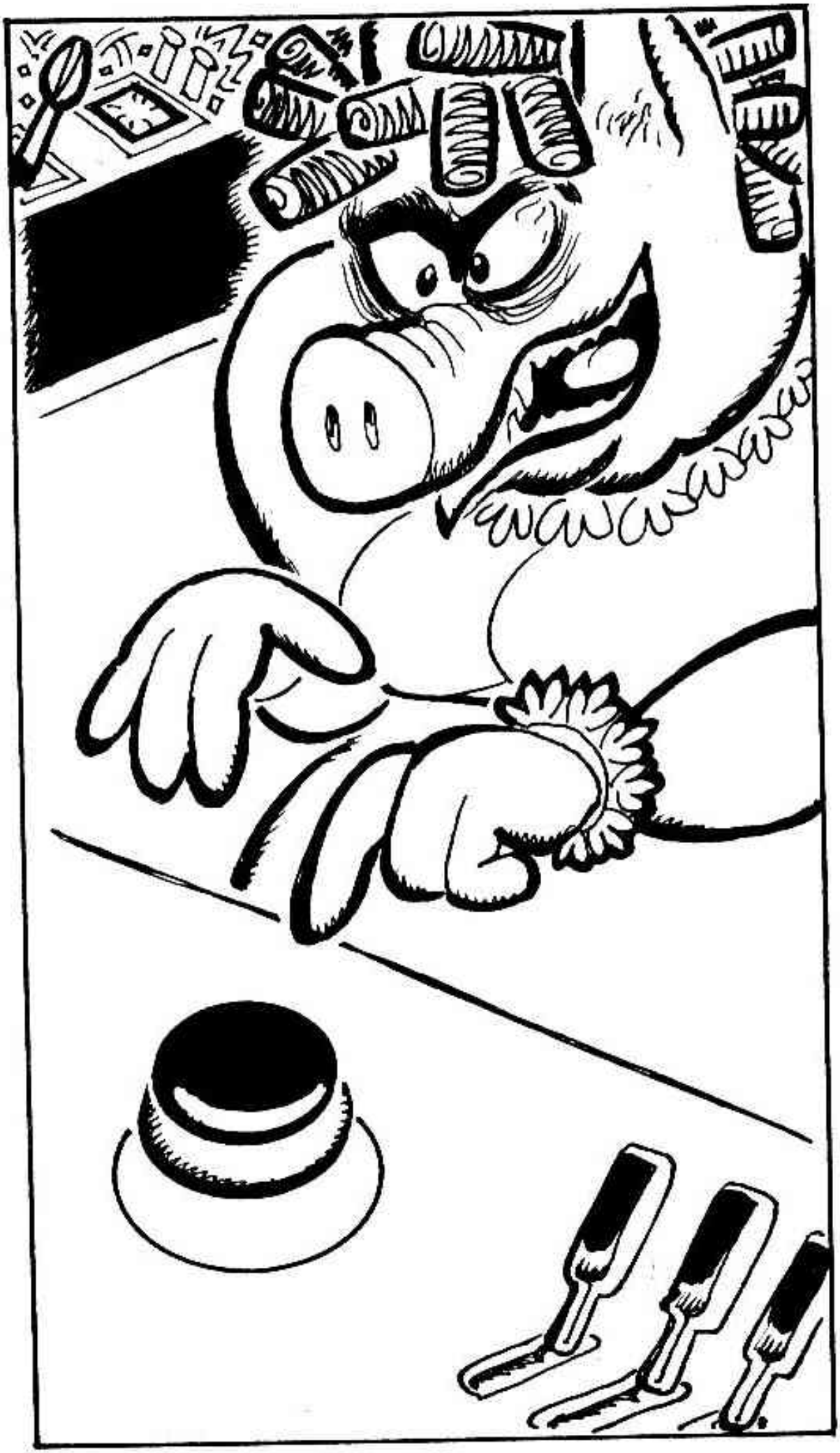
through that glass WITHOUT his cape! And now he has it back!"

Somewhat calmer, she said, "Very well. He's freed those mice and stopped the treadmill, but all he's really accomplished is to force me to change my timetable. Instead of tomorrow morning, we begin tonight, right this minute!"

Crossing to an elaborate panel full of switches and buttons, she reached out and pushed one large red button!

"Goodbye, Mouseville!" she laughed. "Tomorrow, goodbye world capitals, unless my terms are met!"

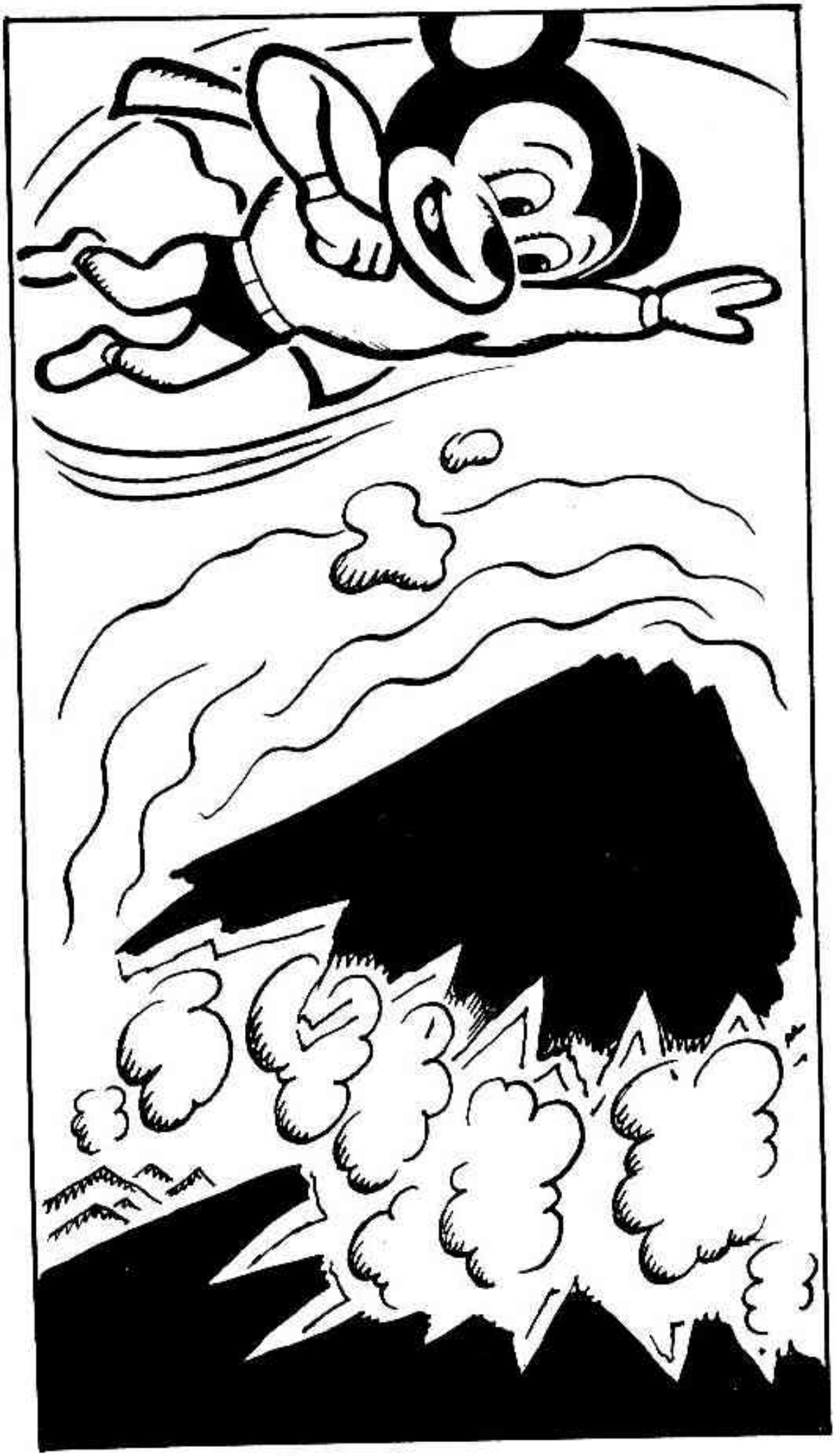
Soaring high over the mountainside, Mighty Mouse watched. For perhaps ten seconds, nothing happened. But then the top of the mountain began to glow brighter and



brighter. And next it began to vibrate faster and faster. With an unearthly roar, the top of the mountain blew into the air and then collapsed, taking half the mountain down into itself!

The next afternoon, Mighty Mouse, the Mayor, the police chief, and Alpha Field gathered in the Mayor's office.

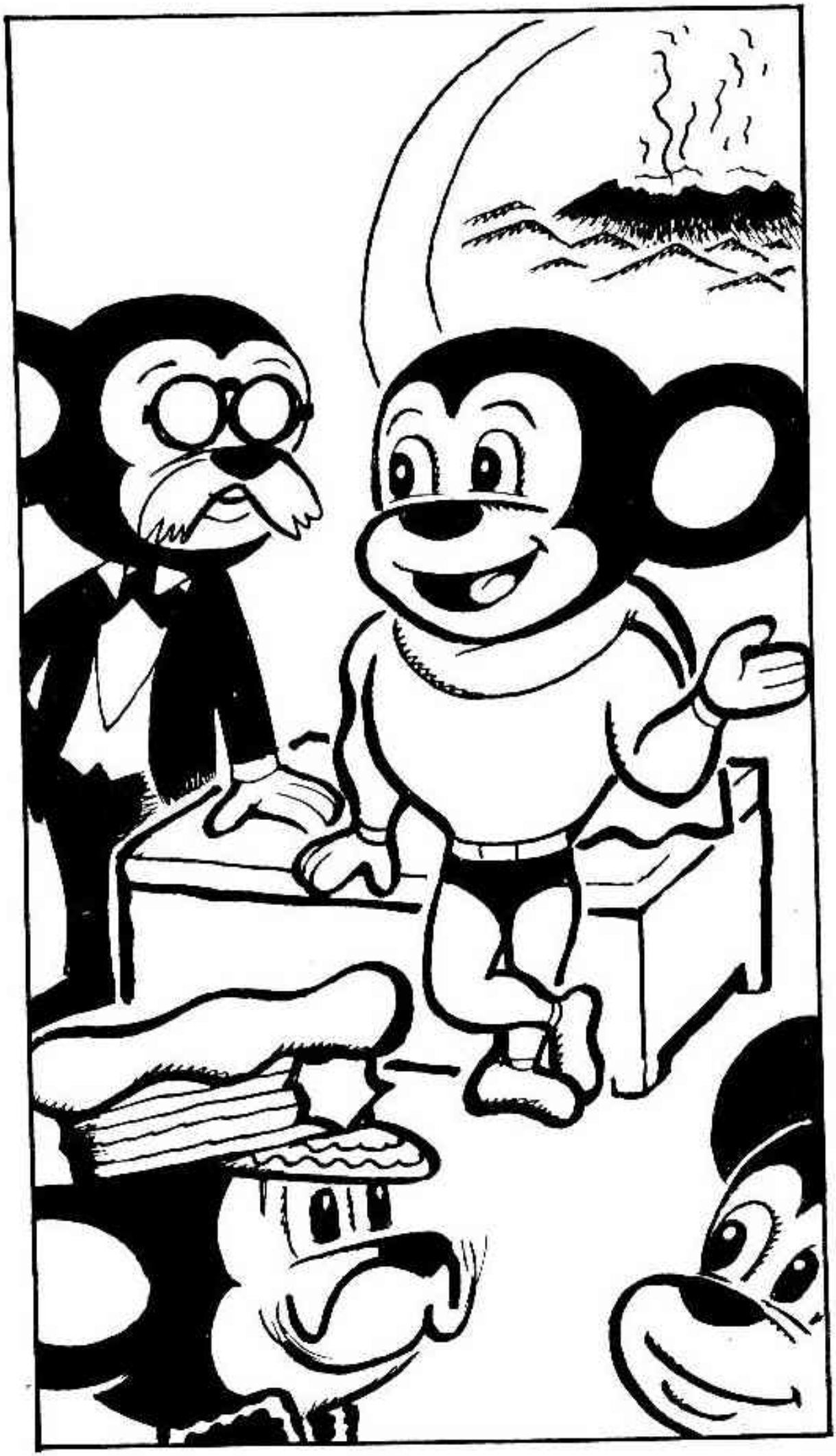
In response to a question from the Mayor, Mighty Mouse said, "It was the only way. To wreck her plans, I HAD to have my super-powers. She had my cape, and the only thing I could think of was the spirit, and faith, and confidence of those young mice. I knew it could last only a very short time, but that was enough to get me into that laboratory to recover the cape. Under cover of the confusion and darkness, I managed to change and



reverse some connections so that, when Hildegarde Hogge thought she was destroying Mouseville as her first step toward world domination, she was destroying her whole organization, laboratory, treadmill, guards, equipment, and all!"

The Mayor said, "You were right and we were wrong, Mighty Mouse. You did an invaluable job for us, at great risk to yourself!"

"That's my job," replied Mighty Mouse. "Taking risks is part of it!" Then turning to Alpha Field and the police chief, he added, "So many things have happened in the past day or so, I'm afraid I overlooked something. The Hogge BROTHERS! They had a part in this, and they should pay!"



"Maybe YOU overlooked them, but WE didn't!" said the chief of police. "They're under arrest and in jail right now! We're holding them until we get a confession from them about their part in this affair!"

"But what could you arrest them for?" asked Mighty Mouse.

With a laugh the police chief answered, "You'd never guess it in a million years! The fools forgot to pay their electric bill!"